

Buddhism on Zoom
Discussions on Dhamma

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1

Zoom Jottings

1.1 Zoom jottings 1

Sarah Abbott

Aug 4, #164078

Nina & all

I'll try to add just a brief note from my jottings during different discussions.

Jeff had made a comment about giving something to someone to eat.

Ajahn stressed that giving or not giving is by conditions, no matter what, not by anyone's control. Understanding this is the only way that there will be less clinging, less lobha. If we try to change what is experienced, "I" is there again.

Don't regret! Don't think about the past or future!

All conditioned dhammas gone or not yet come!

Sarah

1.2 Zoom Jottings 2

Sarah Abbott

Aug 6, #164095

Friends

My surgery went well yesterday and now the day at the hospital seems like a dream. All gone. I insisted on having local anesthesia rather than general anesthesia because I get so sick with it. Apparently during the surgery I was in some pain and asked the doctor to stop the operation at one point, but fortunately he ignored me and afterwards I had no recollection of it. It's just like a bad dream which is instantly forgotten when one wakes up or like the bad experiences in former lives - all forgotten.

In one of the sessions Ajahn was referring to how good or bad situations are not "me", whatever fortune or misfortune, happiness or unhappiness arises, it's just there for a moment. The world is just for a moment now and then gone completely.

When there's more understanding of the momentariness of dhammas as anatta, there is freedom from the bondage of taking these worldly conditions (happiness and unhappiness, fame and insignificance, praise and blame, gain and loss) for something important rather than just passing dhammas arising by conditions.

It also reminds me of the perversion (vipallasas) of taking what is impermanent for permanent, what is not self for self, what is foul for beautiful and what is unsatisfactory for satisfactory all day long.

In reality, no hospital, no surgery, no good or bad situation, but just dhammas arising by their particular conditions and falling away instantly.

Dhamma really is the best medicine at all times!

Sarah

1.3 Zoom Jotting 3

Sarah Abbott

Aug 7, #164109

Friends

On refuge, taking refuge, Ajahn stressed that this means understanding the words of the Buddha, understanding there is no self. No one can condition right understanding. A moment of understanding is taking refuge, more and more to understand his words. The ultimate refuge is in his words, in the Dhamma he taught.

The refuge is always now. What has gone has gone. Don't mind which reality is experienced. Whatever arises is gone instantly.

On a question about the Vinaya for monks with regard to eyes downcast. This can be with attachment or understanding the middle way. Just following conventional ideas about downcast eyes with attachment doesn't lead to any understanding. The same applies to other rules.

Sarah

1.4 Zoom Jottings 4

Sarah Abbott

Aug 7, #164112

Friends

Ajahn Sujin: "Whatever part of the Tipitaka it is, each word points to this moment."

Pañña knows what is meant by developing understanding. When a dhamma appears, nothing else appears. It knows that which experiences and that which is experienced.

Whatever arises does so by conditions. It seems normal and obvious, but the truth is very subtle.

Whether there is danger or not, (whether there is surgery or not or anything else), there must be seeing, hearing and so on.

Daily life is the examination. The Dhamma is not in the book! There has to be the understanding of daily life as “not me” and the understanding of the characteristic of what appears now instead of thinking about “how much or how little”. Whatever appears and is known is according to the accumulation of understanding with no expectation of what will come next.

The birthday is each day, each moment.

Sarah

1.5 Zoom Jottings 5

Sarah Abbott

Aug 8, #164122

Friends

Ajahn was talking about “not me” - that which can experience and that which is experienced.

Lukas: I’m not interested in dhamma...

AS: Always “I”.

The second ariya sacca (Noble Truth) is lobha.

She talked about the 4 āsavas, (the subtle intoxicants which ooze out instantly after seeing, hearing and so on. Three of these are kinds of lobha - clinging to sense objects, clinging to becoming and clinging with wrong view. The other one is ignorance.

The light of understanding refers to what can be understood at this moment as not self. It begins to develop, not forgetting this moment when there is no desire or attachment, understanding that whatever arises is anattā, not in anyone’s control.

Wanting all the time, like wanting to come back to study leads to the wrong way, not understanding dhammas as not self and attached to the cycle of birth and death all the time.

Now, the exam is at the moment of seeing and hearing, arising and falling, one at a time. Life goes on by conditions.

Sarah

1.6 Zoom Jottings 6

Sarah Abbott

Aug 9, #164128

Friends

Sun Mai asked a question about the Vinaya and following rules. He said the Vietnamese friends had discussed this topic and he gave details about situations and conduct of the monk, such as looking ahead not further than the length of a plough, not looking around. He asked how to have more wise reflections when studying the Vinaya,

All the rules are for the purpose of the development of satipaṭṭhāna. Someone had mentioned that this (topic of Vinaya) was a boring topic but paṇṇā knows what is meant by developing understanding of what appears. At that moment nothing else appears. That which experiences and that which is experienced. Whatever part of the Tipitaka we read, it points to this moment, not to situations.

What is Vinaya? The true meaning is for understanding. “Vineti” leads away from akusala, leading out of saṃsāra, so the Vinaya is dhamma, leading out of saṃsāra.

What is sacca ñāna? Any truth to be known now so it can be sacca ñāna, otherwise there will never be any understanding of even the 1st truth.

Sarah

1.7 Zoom Jottings 7

Sarah Abbott

Aug 10, #164133

Friends

Nina raised the subject or wrong view. Ajahn stressed that it has to be understood as a reality. If it's not the object of understanding when it appears, it's only thinking about it.

A dhamma is not in Holland, not in Kaeng Krachan, no place at all - just a reality. It's the wrong view that takes it as a self or thing or place. Only paññā can eradicate the idea of self as something permanent. Paññā is not self either. Whatever arises is a dhamma, not self.

Sacca ñāna - understand the 1st truth, dukkha. That which arises and falls away. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th can't be known if the 1st is not understood. What is the truth at this moment? This moment is the 1st truth. The 2nd, lobha as the cause, is more difficult to understand the truth of it.

What is the purpose of listening? Each word brings about the understanding as taught by the Buddha. Paññā understands the truth as the truth. Because of attachment there's no understanding of what arises and falls away. Instead there is attachment to what has already gone almost all the time. This is why the 2nd truth doesn't appear yet. The 4 āsavas, kāmāsava, bhāvāsava, avijjāsava and diṭṭhāsava arise after seeing and hearing all day long, quite unknown.

Sarah

1.8 Zoom Jottings 8

Sarah Abbott

Aug 11, #164150

Friends

Ajahn Sujin mentions the āsavas (intoxicants) a lot. These are kāmāsava (clinging to sense objects), bhāvāsava (clinging to existing), avijjāsava (ignorance) and diṭṭhāsava (wrong view). The reason that the Buddha taught about these āsavas is to show how ignorance and attachment "ooze" out even in the sense door experiences, long before there is any idea of anyone or anything. So even now as we read and study dhamma, there's no knowing at all about these very subtle defilements.

The understanding of anattaness has to develop from intellectual right understanding to satipaṭṭhāna to vipassanā ñāna. After the vipas-

sanā ñānas the pariññas apply what has been understood by the vipas-sanā ñānas, that which hasn't been understood clearly before.

In the beginning (of intellectual right understanding), a few moments of understanding of realities is not enough and even when it is direct understanding of satipaṭṭhāna, the moments of understanding of dhammas as anattā are not enough to overcome doubts and wrong view.

Gradually, through the growth of right understanding, there's more and more understanding that sati is not "I am aware". It depends on paññā to see what hinders the knowing of dhammas as realities - that which is so attached. The 2nd Noble Truth of lobha as cause cannot be known in the beginning.

With regard to the 3rd Noble Truth, dukkha nirodha, if there is no understanding of the 1st Truth, how can there be understanding of the ending of reality? If there is no understanding of the danger of what arises and falls away there cannot be the understanding of the 3rd Truth. There must be the understanding of the arising and falling away of dhammas by conditions. If there are no conditions, nothing arises.

Sarah

1.9 Zoom Jottings 9

Sarah Abbott

Aug 14, #164182

Friends

(From one of the Chinese/English sessions with Yuan and other friends)

Each word of the Buddha is precious. It's now!

Qu about practice.

AS: What does it mean?

Qu A standardised procedure to get something, about doing something.

AS: What is doing and what is it for?

Qu - to have more wisdom

AS: "I want to get something"

Is seeing “doing?” No one is doing. When there’s no understanding, what is doing?

I discussed about bhāvanā, the development of understanding, not practice or anyone doing anything.

It begins with understanding one word at a time. This is the beginning of understanding of paññā.

The difference between ignorance and right understanding is here and now. Pariyatti is learning to understand reality now. It must be the understanding of not self, firmer and firmer. So if someone says “self”, it’s not true, it’s understood to be wrong.

From birth to death, there is nothing but the arising of realities unknown. If there is no understanding, there is just ignorance from birth to death for aeons and aeons, non-stop!

Sarah

1.10 Zoom Jottings 10

Sarah Abbott

Aug 15, #164191

Friends

(From one of the Chinese/English sessions)

Know the purpose for listening and considering - it’s just for understanding whatever appears now.

AS: What appears now?

Ans: Reflecting on what you’re saying, my foot on the floor, observing hardness.

AS: Different realities or just one?

Wanting to observe, wanting to be aware?

This is just a story about realities, not the nature of reality as anattā.

Sound is just that which appears. Understand a reality as it is, not my voice or the sound of music, just sound. Gradually this is the way to eliminate the idea of something or someone, no one there at all. For example, the sound “nāma”, there’s no understanding yet, but it must be different from another sound, “rūpa”. “I” is there all the

time because what appears is not known from other realities. At the moment the sound appears, it's not the same as the meaning of the word. It doesn't appear well because there's no understanding of the sound as just sound. There are conditions for the sound to appear, not anything else.

There has to be understanding of the meaning of reality, of dhamma. Without understanding the difference between each one as it is, how the understanding of the story sound which is different from the moment when it appears to understanding it won't be known that there is nothing else at all.

To be truthful, is there any understanding of sound yet? Sound usually appears with ignorance, "my" sound or the sound of music - (in truth) it's just sound which falls away instantly.

Life is like this from moment to moment - each one has its characteristic by conditions, uncontrollable, never to return again. This is the beginning of understanding life and the world and everything, to understand what is meant by dhamma - no one there, no one in the room, just different realities. When there is no understanding, there is the idea of something all the time, the idea of the sound of this and that.

Sarah

1.11 Zoom Jottings 11

Sarah Abbott

Aug 17 #164202

Friends

(contd from Chinese/English discussion)

AS: To understand the meaning of reality as not self, there must be the understanding of each reality. Hearing, memory, feeling, like and dislike are all *suññata* and *anatta*. Without proper conditions they cannot arise. This is why they are *anattā*, uncontrollable.

Sound is not my voice and seeing is not my seeing. We need to begin to consider the words of the Buddha respectfully because it's not easy

to directly understand the truth of realities.

We use many words without understanding them, such as awareness. Seeing is seeing now, not a moment ago. Without listening and considering carefully there cannot be the clear understanding of what the Buddha taught.

What is *nāma* now at this moment of seeing? What about understanding now? It has to be one's own understanding, not the other's. Is it direct understanding now?

"I hear", "I think", is it right? When there's no clear understanding, it cannot eradicate the idea of self. Hearing about *pariyatti* is only the story of what arises.

Can anyone practice?

Sarah

1.12 Zoom Jottings 12

Sarah Abbott

Aug 19 #164225

Friends

(From one of the Chinese/English discussions)

Ariya Kamma asked whether we should stay in a good mood or adjust *kamma* and cultivate *kusala kamma*. She asked how to avoid *cittas* which are frustrated and inferior and can condition disease. According to the book, one should avoid inferior states. If there is no practice, how is this possible?

Ajahn Sujin asked her if anyone can do anything or are there only realities. What is there now? Is there "I" now or just seeing which arises to see? Without *citta*, the body cannot move or do anything.

Is life "my life" or what is life now? Practice, what is it? What's the purpose of practising?

Ariya Kamma answered the purpose is to cultivate the habit to stay awake. Someone else mentioned to manage *akusala* to *kusala*.

The difference between practising and understanding - at the moment of understanding, no one is practising. Develop right understand-

ing from moment to moment. We talked further about bhāvana, sati, paññā and how they are not self. We also discussed awareness and awakening. When there is seeing, is there any awakening? When seeing arises, it arises with 7 cetasikas, no one can make more arise. When there's an idea of changing the reality now, it's not understanding anattā.

Only when there is firmer confidence can there be the understanding of different realities. Without careful study it's always "I want to understand" all the time. When there's more understanding about the cittas before and after seeing, gradually there's more understanding of no self. Seeing is only a moment of experiencing no matter it's the ant's or the elephant's seeing. What is seen is not a floor, a table or any thing at all.

Sarah

1.13 Zoom Jottings 13

Sarah Abbott

Aug 21 #164244 Edited Aug 22

Friends

(continued from a Chinese/English discussion)

Discussion about ariya sacca, the Noble Truths.

This is the truth about dhammas. Whatever arises is conditioned. Is dukkha known to paññā? Is it the absolute truth now or just an idea? Ignorance cannot tell.

Paṭipatti doesn't mean practice at all. If there is no clear understanding of reality now, one at a time, it's impossible to understand the arising and falling away of a reality.

Ariya Kamma asked about the objects of samatha bhāvana.

Ajahn: Can samatha bhāvana understand reality now?

AK: Yes.

AS: As self.

AK: As a short-cut.

AS: Then there must have been Sammā Sambuddha before the Buddha's Teachings!

Sarah

1.14 Zoom Jottings 14

Sarah Abbott

Aug 21 #164245

Friends

From one of the Sunday English discussions.

Maeve asked a question about development and accumulations.

Ajahn Sujin explained that the development of paññā understands accumulations now from moment to moment. There are always conditions for ignorance and akusala but not always conditions for paññā. When there is more paññā, there are more paramī (perfections) to understand the truth.

Maeve asked another question about the use of Pāli terms and language.

AS: What's the purpose of studying in Pāli? Can you understand Pāli better than your own language? Even in the Buddha's time could the person who spoke Pāli understand seeing? Any word which can bring about understanding of reality now (is the right word). For example, seeing or cakkhu viññāna - which conditions more understanding?

As understanding grows it understands more about the depth of kusala. Even though we are talking about dhamma, there is not understanding of the depth of dhamma. Even though we're talking about seeing, does it appear now?

Sarah

1.15 Zoom Jottings 15

Sarah Abbott

Aug 22 #164262

Friends

(From an early discussion in Vietnamese/English)

There was mention of the 4 sampajaññas (understandings) and also the 4 padhānas (efforts), so I'll elaborate for anyone who had difficulty following the discussion.

Sampajañña is pañña (understanding). Sati-sampajañña refers to awareness and understanding, as referred to in the development of satipaṭṭhāna.

In brief these are:

a) sātakka sampajañña - sātakka means purpose, beneficial. The understanding of what is beneficial or good from knowing what is the purpose of the right understanding of realities.

b) sappāya sampajañña - sappāya means what is suitable. Understanding what is suitable for the path.

c) gocara sampajañña - gocara means object (ārammaṇa). Here it refers to the object for right understanding, such as visible object which appears now.

d) asammoha sampajañña - asammoha is the opposite of ignorance. It refers to understanding of reality now without ignorance.

Question about the 4 right efforts (samma padhāna) or sammā vāyāma of the 8 fold Path.

1. the effort to avoid (saṃvara-padhāna)
2. to overcome (pahāna-padhāna)
3. to develop (bhāvanā-padhāna)
4. to maintain (anurakkhaṇa-padhāna)

No self is involved from beginning to end. Viriya cetasika arises by conditions and when it arises with right understanding it is right effort.

1) refers to the effort to avoid unwholesome states. Now at moments of wise consideration, there is such abandoning of what is unprofitable or unwholesome.

2) refers to the effort overcome unwholesome states. At moments of understanding, there is prevention of the unprofitable that has not yet arisen.

3) refers to the effort to develop wholesome states not yet arisen. At moments of understanding with right effort, there is the arising of the unarisen profitable states and well-being.

4) refers to the effort to maintain the wholesome states. The profitable that has arisen is maintained and developed.

“The monk rouses his will to avoid the arising of evil, unwholesome things not yet arisen ... to overcome them ... to develop wholesome things not yet arisen ... to maintain them, and not to let them disappear, but to bring them to growth, to maturity and to the full perfection of development. And he makes effort, stirs up his energy, exerts his mind and strives” (A. IV, 13).

It seems that such terms are in the book, but they are referring to the realities now which are conditioned at moments of right understanding.

Sarah

1.16 Zoom Jottings 16

Sarah Abbott Aug 23 #164276

Friends

(continued from a Vietnamese/English discussion)

Question from Ngoc Dang about pariyatti, reading, listening, hearing and “then goes to practice, paṭipatti”. Should we notice or practice?

Ajahn Sujin discussed how pariyatti understanding from reading/listening and considering what is true begins from very little right consideration and understanding to “on and on and on”. From the beginning it’s not “me” or “you” who understands, but understanding arising by conditions leading to paṭipatti understanding and eventually to paṭivedha understanding.

It doesn’t matter what level of understanding, it is the understanding of what appears now - sound or hearing or thinking of whatever reality. Usually because of ignorance it’s taken for something all the time.

Pariyatti is not just a word that we're interested to talk about, it's now! Without the Teachings we don't know what is what. We just want to understand the word but don't know what it's about. When we hear the words, there can be the beginning of understanding what is there now. From not knowing anything, there is the beginning of understanding of what is there now.

Qu: Someone mentioned that inside she feels very nervous and always thinks about "I" or "you" or "he" or "she". Also, when there is anger, she tries to be aware and follow the words of the Buddha.

AS: Forget about the words of the Buddha and consider what the truth is there now. There are moments of anger, seeing, thinking and so on. Can it be "I" or someone or some thing?

The way to develop understanding is to understand at this moment. What is there now? What is real now? There's no way to do anything.

Qu: Someone asked how she can accumulate paññā?

AS: Does pañña want anything? Wanting, wishing, craving all the time. Each word should be understood as letting go! Letting go of what? Let go of craving. Whenever there is the idea of "how can I", it indicates no understanding of dhamma.

Hearing and considering leads to firmer confidence. No one can make it happen. Without khanti, sacca, adhitthāna and viriya paramī, it's impossible to understand reality now.

Sarah

1.17 Zoom Jottings 17

Sarah Abbott

Aug 27 #164315

Friends

(From a Vietnamese/English discussion)

Thao asked about meditation and the Buddha's enlightenment, about samatha and the intention to sit still to calm the mind.

AS: Who is meditating? Can anyone meditate? Can anyone calm the mind?

T: I can do that. I will set the mind. I can clear the mind. Meditation - the Buddha understood the truth, sitting under the tree meditating. Clarity of mind from sitting, relaxing.

AS: One word at a time. Enlightened to what? The truth of what? Enlightened to the truth of seeing, hearing, everything. So what did he say about seeing which he had been enlightened to?

Is the mind dirty or clean? Some people try to make it clear or clean by some method, but it's so very dirty with ignorance.

Discussion about pariyatti leading to the direct understanding, satipaṭṭhāna. Bhāvanā is the development of understanding. Vipassanā is the clear understanding of realities as they are. Right understanding has to be very firm to condition the direct understanding of a reality now.

Hearing and wise considering leads to the end of ignorance and all kilesa (defilements). Before hearing the Teachings, everything is “me”, “I”, but after hearing the Teachings that there are just realities which are gone, never to return, there is the development of the understanding of the Truth, but not yet the direct understanding. Just listen!

Sarah

1.18 Zoom Jottings 18

Sarah Abbott

Aug 28 #164328

Friends

(Continuing from a Vietnamese/English discussion)

Whatever arises depends on paccaya, conditions. Without understanding of these dhammas, there can never be the 2nd stage of insight, the paccaya pariggaha ñāna, (the clear understanding of the conditioned

nature of dhammas). There is no one at all, just kusala, akusala, vipāka, kiriya citta and rūpas - all depending on conditions.

Each word of the Buddha will lead to the understanding of what appears now, little by little. There should be no selection or expectation of what will arise. The future hasn't come and the past has gone. No choosing at all. The Buddha didn't say "Do that"! It's impossible. When it's taught by anyone to do or to try, it's not the word of the enlightened one.

The Teachings are so subtle and profound. If not, there would not be the vipassanā ñānas, the clear insights of different degrees (of paṭivedha understanding).

1.19 Zoom Jottings 19

Sarah Abbott

Sep 4 #164384

Friends

From an English session

A friend mentioned her mother was dying in hospital and she was dependent on a breathing tube. She wants the children to remove it. She wonders whether this is killing.

Ajahn reminded her that when someone dies it depends on kamma. The tube may be removed but she may continue to live or may die before it's removed. It depends on one's intention. One just does the best for one's mother at the time.

Jeff also mentioned world conflicts and we discussed about the worlds at each moment, through the 6 doorways. Whatever arises now and falls away is a world.

Sarah

1.20 Zoom Jottings 20

Sarah Abbott

Sep 8 #164425

Friends

From a Vietnamese/English discussion on 21.6.20

A friend asked us about a quote from the Visuddhimagga about virtue and abandoning (*pahāna*) and non-transgression. I referred to some of the different kinds of abandoning (*pahāna*) as given in the texts. These are:

1. Tadaṅga *pahāna* refers to the partial elimination of self and *vitikamma* (strong) *kilesa* (defilements) through the *vipassana ñānas*. Ordinary *kusala* can be *tadaṅga* (temporary elimination of *akusala*), but it's not *pahāna* unless it is *vipassana ñāna* which begins to abandon *kilesa*. Each *vipassana ñāna* is therefore *tadaṅga pahāna*.
2. *Vikkambhana pahāna* refers to a different levels of *samādhi*, specifically to *jhāna* which temporarily suppresses and overcomes *pariyutthana* (subtle) *kilesa*.
3. *Samuccheda pahāna* refers to the function of the 4 *magga cittas* to eradicate *anusaya* (latent tendency) *kilesa* at various stages when realizing *nibbāna*. *Samuccheda* is the “cutting off”.
4. *Paṭippassaddhi pahāna* refers to the path knowledge when the 4 *magga cittas* arises. The knowledge of *nibbāna* is realized.
5. *Nissaraṇa pahāna* refers to *nibbāna* itself.

Now when there is any understanding of realities, it is the beginning of the path leading to abandoning of defilements, the beginning of “abandoning” of *kilesa* (defilements).

Sarah

1.21 Zoom Jottings 21

Sarah Abbott

Sep 8 #164426

Friends

From a Vietnamese/English discussion on Wed 24.6.20

Ajahn asked where we are. Nowhere at all! Where is seeing, just seeing? It's only the idea of somewhere. This is the way to understand about nothing, nowhere at all. "Once in nowhere"! Apart from the absolute truth, there is nothing else. If one thinks otherwise, there's always the idea of "I am sitting somewhere", not understanding that each reality has gone completely.

She stressed that the best thing is to understand what is at this moment, no "I" at all, nothing. Only such understanding can lead to the end of saṃsāra. When there is no precise understanding, there cannot be the idea of no self. There has to be understanding gradually. Is there the beginning of understanding at this moment? Otherwise there is always the idea of "I know", "I understand", "I learn", "I listen", when actually there is no "I" at all from the very beginning.

So where are you now? Each reality once in saṃsāra only.

There was a question about going forth and nekkhama (renunciation). No matter where you are, whenever there is no understanding there is no getting away from the wrong idea of self. The clinging is to sense objects and whatever is taken for self. Now if right understanding arises, it is away from wrong understanding little by little. It's not easy at all to take away clinging to the idea of self and things.

Sarah

1.22 Zoom Jottings 22

Sarah Abbott Sep 9 #164432

Friends

Continuing from the Vietnamese/English session on 24.6.20

Ajahn was saying that we think we're in the world but we're not there because there are only conditioned realities arising and falling away. Only paññā can understand the difference (between the imaginary world and the world of realities arising and falling away). When reality appears, there is nothing at all, otherwise there is always something.

There is nothing to do at all, just listen to the right words of the Buddha until there is confidence of what appears now as it is. The flux of the arising and falling away of each one covers up that there's nothing at all, just the rapidity of the arising and falling of realities, changing all the time. So life goes along by conditions quite unknown until there is understanding of what it is.

It's so useless to cling because there is no one at all!

Sarah

1.23 Zoom Jottings 23

Sarah Abbott

25th September 8:25am #164613

Friends

(Continuing from the Vietnamese/English session on 24.6.20)

There was a question about vipassanā and it was stressed that there must be the understanding of reality now which has to develop on and on.

Ajahn Sujin asked whether there is enough intellectual understanding to become just a little detached from that which hears now. There is not enough intellectual understanding until satipaṭṭhāna, the direct understanding and awareness, arises by conditions. Now it is "I" who thinks about hearing. This is because there's not enough understanding that in truth it's just a moment of experiencing sound and then gone.

It takes time to understand that it's always a dhamma, a reality, which experiences an object, no matter what.

Instead of thinking about vipassanā, what about understanding more and more what appears now. This is the way to become detached from wanting to understand. Know that everything in life is right now, non-stop. Nothing can be taken for “I” or something permanent at all.

There has to be the letting go of the wanting or desire to understand what appears because hearing and understanding develops little by little. If it's not this way it's *sīlabbataparamāsa*, wrong practice.

Sarah

1.24 Zoom Jottings 24

Sarah Abbott

24th September 9:04am #164614

Friends

(Continuing from the Vietnamese/English session on 24.6.20)

There was a question from Duong Tuan about *sammā saṅkappa*, right thinking.

We are discussing *vitakka cetasika*. At moments of seeing and hearing, no *vitakka* arises. After these *cittas*, *vitakka* is like the “foot of the world” and is needed to experience the object. In the sense door processes the following *cittas* experience the same object as seeing or hearing because of *vitakka* leading them to experience that visible object or sound.

When it's right *vitakka*, it arises with the *citta* with *paññā*, right understanding. If *vitakka* doesn't touch the object and *sati* isn't aware of it, *paññā* cannot arise. *Sammā saṅkappa* (right thinking) and *sammā diṭṭhi* (right understanding) make up the understanding part of the 8-fold path. Right *vitakka* therefore develops to be *sammā saṅkappa*.

All realities are *anattā*. Learning to consider the truth and hear the truth is right thinking.

We live in the world of nimitta (signs on account of different realities arising and falling away in such rapid succession). All the nimitta are taken for some thing or some one. However, the words of right thinking are that all dhammas are anattā, arising and falling away just for an instant. They are so brief and fleeting like bubbles.

Sarah

1.25 Zoom Jottings 25

Sarah Abbott

9:34am #164692

Friends

From the English discussion 27.6.20

Nina asked a question about nimitta.

Ajahn asked her what is seen now. Is it visible object or people now? What is seen conditions different shapes and forms so that what appears is something with many details. That is nimitta.

One reality cannot appear so from birth to death it's the world of nimitta. Reality is not known until the Buddha's enlightenment at all. Each reality appears as nimitta because of the rapidity of the arising and falling away of each one.

What is experienced now is nothing, but there is always the idea of something. Everything is nothing. Everything is nimitta - it's only the image of that which has been conditioned. There is the wrong idea of something permanent and the clinging to nimittā, but it's only the nimitta, no one, no thing. What is left from the flux of rūpa, saññā and other realities are just nimittas but each reality has completely gone. There is no one. We refer to the nimitta anubyañjana (signs and details) as trees, branches and so on but they are not the actual realities which have arisen and fallen away.

Sarah

1.26 Zoom Jottings 26

Sarah Abbott

9:59am #164693

Friends

Continued from the English discussion 27.6.20

Lukas raised some questions about awareness. Ajahn reminded him not to mind about the awareness but to understand what appears now. “Don’t try to detect whether it’s that which understands or not. Life is just in a moment of experiencing.” She also reminded him to be firm about dhammas as anattā. “Just live naturally as usual otherwise lobha is there unknown.”

Lukas said he day-dreams all the time.

Ajahn asked about understanding.

L: Only a bit, not all the time.

A: Is there understanding of the word or the reality now?

L: It’s easy to think about the word. There needs to be sati (awareness) to help understand, otherwise it’s only intellectual.

A: So you understand the word “awareness” but you have doubt whether there is awareness.

L: My point is that I don’t have any motivation.

A: Are you interested in knowing what awareness is or whether there is awareness?

L: I’m worried that if there is not awareness there will be a bad rebirth.

A: What about seeing now? Should everything be the object of understanding? There is no choice, no selection. There is reality no matter what. If there is no understanding, there is no awareness of a reality, one at a time. What is known now or do you just want to know awareness, to have awareness?

L: I know what you mean.

A: No I, there is only a moment of experiencing. Sabbe dhammā anattā. (All realities are not self). There is no one, no self, no me. Without awareness there is no understanding. We should not crave or want to have understanding because it’s not self, not me, not under

my control. There are just different realities appearing by different conditions. This (understanding) will lead to more understanding and confidence of realities as *anattā*, no wishing or hoping to know this or that because there is no one at all, just different realities. Right awareness of the eightfold path is not just understanding words that condition understanding. That's the wrong idea.

What is real now? There is a new one and another new one and it appears just once in *samsāra*. No one can do anything at all. The seeing now - who makes it arise? The (idea of) self just wants to understand this or that but the only way is to become detached, little by little, detached from taking everything for a permanent reality. It's much shorter (than one imagines) but because of *nimitta* it appears as something.

Sarah

1.27 Zoom jottings 27

Sarah Abbott

Oct 2 #164718

Friends

Continued from the English discussion 27.6.20

Lukas mentioned he lacked the motivation to practice and had no goal. Ajahn Sujin responded by saying this was the idea of self. The proof of the Teachings is the understanding of whatever appears now.

There was some discussion about the meaning of *pañipatti*. *Paṇi* means particular and *patti* means to reach the truth (with understanding of it). So it is the reaching of the truth of that particular object with understanding. It has nothing to do with practice as usually used.

It's easy to say that everything is *anattā* but what about "there's no me", "all dhammas are not me" in your own language? Not "me", not anything at all. Understanding leads closer and closer to what appears, to the truth now. Whatever arises and falls away in the world is just a reality.

Life is just in a moment, from moment to moment. It's not me! When it seems to be more than a moment, it's me! There are conditions for dhammas to go on and on. This is understanding dhamma. Without dhammas, there's no world at all. What is taken for the sun or moon or anything are dhammas which arise and fall away all the time.

Sarah

1.28 Zoom jottings 28

Sarah Abbott

Oct 2 #164719

Friends

Continued from the English discussion 27.6.20

An Le asked a question about the development of understanding and the danger of ignorance.

At a moment of understanding there is no mohā (Ignorance), but when there is no understanding, mohā is there. When there is understanding it is true and sincere.

All dhammas are anattā (not self). What about sincerity? It all depends on understanding from considering the true words, from hearing more and more so that understanding will be firmer and more confident in the truth.

Sarah

1.29 Zoom jottings 29

Sarah Abbott

Oct 4 #164738

Friends

From the Vietnamese/English discussion 28.6.20

Nga Hoa raised the topic of *sīla* for monks in the Visuddhimagga and purifying the mind. She mentioned that wearing brown robes was a reminder about being a monk, so that the mind would not wander as usual. The topic of *śīlabbataparāmāsa* (clinging to rituals with wrong view) was also raised.

Ajahn Sujin asked everyone if there is no understanding of the truth, can there be understanding of what a monk is? She said not to mind about what is in the Visuddhimagga or Tipiṭaka because it's all about now, but there must be patience to understand the truth at this moment.

What is appearing now is not known so there cannot be understanding of what a Bhikkhu is or what is *śīlabbataparāmāsa*. No one knows the truth so it is taken for something like *śīlabbataparāmāsa*, (wrong practice and rituals) instead of understanding the words of the Buddha about now!

"If this moment is known as it is, is seeing a monk? Is *śīlabbataparāmāsa* a monk? If there's no understanding of what appears it's no use to talk about other things because they don't bring any understanding about now."

The point is not just reading about what appears but understanding what appears now as not self, not anything. If there is doubt about *śīlabbataparāmāsa* it means there's no understanding of this moment.

It was also stressed that the proof of understanding is whether there is such understanding of reality now and whether it's understood that one one can make such realities arise. Otherwise we're just talking about that which appears without understanding at all.

Sarah

1.30 Zoom jottings 30

Sarah Abbott

Oct 14 #164879

Friends

From the Vietnamese/English discussion 28.6.20 continued

There had been a discussion about understanding at this moment following the earlier questions about *silabbataparāmāsa* (wrong practice). Nga Hoa asked about whilst reading books, going to the beach or swimming.

Ajahn asked her whether there can be understanding now of what appears as it is. When there's understanding, there's no *silabbataparāmāsa*. It's important to just listen to the truth (about life now) and understand whether it's true or not. When there's no understanding, who can understand the truth? When it's not this way, it's all *silabbataparāmāsa*. One tries and it's the story of "I" at such times.

If there's no *avijjā* (Ignorance), there's no *akusala* (unwholesomeness), no misunderstanding about what appears now, no thing at all. That understanding is the opposite of *attānūdiṭṭhi* (the wrong understanding of self and things). It leads to *silabbataparāmāsa* (all kinds of wrong practices). No matter how many different wrong views there are, they all come from *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (self view) and *attānūdiṭṭhi* as base.

Long asked a question about the computer screen we're looking at. We discussed more about the *āsavas* (the "intoxicants" or very subtle kinds of attachment, ignorance and wrong view which "ooze out" even in the sense door processes). Usually there's always "I" or "something" there all the time, even before what is seen is known as a computer or table.

Sarah

1.31 Zoom jottings 31

Sarah Abbott

Oct 15 #164891

Friends

From the Vietnamese/English discussion 28.6.20 continued

Sakkaccabhāvana means study the truth respectfully. Such respect for the truth develops in a moment when there is more understanding, little by little. As long as there are no conditions for understanding,

there has to be truthfulness that there is none at all, no conditions for sati (awareness) of anattā (non-self nature of realities) now.

Gradually there will be more and more confidence of realities as being anattā. The development of understanding is the only way to gradually eliminate the idea of self. Otherwise there is *silabbataparāmāsa*. Right understanding understands the difference between the right and the wrong paths, otherwise it's not the right path. It's very subtle and takes a long time to eradicate the idea of self and things. The understanding has to be keener and keener, sharper and sharper. When there is no *sammā ditṭhi* (right understanding), we live in darkness.

There is no rule about place or time, but there can be understanding of seeing now, that reality which just experiences.

We can read about *sakkaccabhāvana* in the commentary in the *Cariyapitaka*. I wrote before about the 4 kinds of *bhāvana* referred to in this text including this one:

1. *Sabbasambhāra-bhāvana* : developing all kind of kusalas
2. *Nirantara-bhāvana* : continuous developing of kusalas
3. *Cirakāla-bhāvana* : endless developing of kusalas
4. *Sakkacca-bhāvana* : developing with respect of kusalas

Here is the Pāli relating to these in the development of the Paramī: *Cariyapitaka Atthakathā*:

Tasso hi bodhisambhāresubhāvanā sabbasambhārabhāvanā niran-tarabhāvanā cirakālabhāvanā sakkaccabhāvanā cāti. Tāsu “kappe ca satahasse, caturo ca asaṅkhiye”ti iminā cirakālabhāvanā vuttā. Yo cettha accantasamyo, tena paṭhame atthavikappe sabbaggaṇeṇa ca niran-tarabhāvanā, dutiye atthavikappe sabbaṃ carita”nti iminā sab-basambhārabhāvanā, bodhipācana”nti iminā sakkaccabhāvanā vuttā hoti, yathā taṃ caritaṃ sammāsambodhiṃ pāceti evaṃbhūtabhāvadīpanato.

Here is an introduction by an unknown Burmese writer:

”Of these four (i) *sabbasambhara-bhavana* is complete development of the entire range of Perfections, (ii) *nirantara-bhavana* is development of Perfections throughout the minimum period of four *asankhyeyya* and a hundred thousand aeons, or the medial period of eight *asankhyeyya*

and a hundred thousand aeons or the maximum period of sixteen asankhyeyya and a hundred thousand aeons, without a break of even a single existence, (iii) cirakala-bhavana is development of Perfections for a long duration which is not an aeon less than the minimum period of four asankhyeyya and a hundred thousand aeons; and (iv) sakkacca-bhavana is development of Perfections with seriousness and thoroughness.”

Sarah

1.32 Zoom jottings 32

Sarah Abbott

Oct 16 #164898

Friends

From the Chinese/English discussion 2.7. 20 continued

Dao Juan asked about citta and what the difference is between "citta" and "soul".

Ajahn Sujin: The best thing is to understand what is now. Begin to understand what is clear now. Is there anything now?

DJ: Many things like seeing, visible object, hearing and sound.

AS: All around, but no understanding, is that right? For example, seeing now, but no understanding of seeing which sees now. Can the tree see? Can the table see? Seeing is that which experiences and knows the object seen only. The object appears because of seeing. Is seeing real? Does it arise? If it doesn't arise, can there be that which is seen?

There are two different realities, one which arises to experience an object and one which doesn't experience anything, There is seeing and hearing all death from birth to death. If there is no seeing or hearing can we say there is "I" now? What we call life are just different kinds of experience from moment to moment. If there is no experiencing, there is no life at all. Life is whatever appears at each moment. Each one is conditioned, not arising at anyone's will.

Only at the moment of seeing is there seeing. Only at the moment of hearing is there hearing and sound experienced, never to return, only

once in saṃsāra. So life is that which can experience and that which cannot experience. In life there are different moments of experience until the end of life, but that's not the end of reality.

Citta is that which experiences whatever appears. In absolute truth, there is no one at all, just conditioned realities arising from moment to moment, life to life. What is left is only shape and form, taken for a permanent thing because of the rapidity of the arising and falling away. What is taken for people and things are just different realities arising and falling away.

Sarah

1.33 Zoom jottings 33

Sarah Abbott

Oct 25 #165020

Friends

From the Chinese/English discussion 2.7. 20 continued

Ajahn Sujin asked Dao Juan where he was and he replied that there is no one, so no one to be anywhere.

AS: Yes, but in ordinary language where are you? Without paramattha dhammas (absolute realities) can there be concepts?

DJ: No

AS: We answer "I'm in Bangkok or I'm in Taipei" but how much understanding is there when we speak?

DJ: We try to keep awareness in conventional...

AS: Can we do?

DJ: No 'I'. By listening....

AS: So no one at all can do. For example, seeing now. How can there be the highly developed understanding to understand the arising and falling away, to understand nothing at all which arises and falls? What is in the book is all about cittas and cetasikas and functions but has the understanding of one reality at a time come yet?

It's easy to say "concept", like "tree is concept" but who knows seeing just sees now? Otherwise it's only thinking. One has to be truthful to what is seen now because now it's the memory of nimitta which is concept of reality, something there.

DJ: For liberation, do we all go through understanding the arising and falling of realities? It seems supernatural.

AS: But what is now? Can there be understanding now? It's not supernatural but very natural, only a reality. This is the truth. One reality which experiences now, conditioned just to see, nothing else. It arises just to experience. No one can do anything, no one can stop it. So study dhamma from whatever appears. This is the best thing. No matter whether we talk about seeing, if there's no understanding now of seeing now, it's useless.

Sarah

1.34 Zoom jottings 34

Sarah Abbott

Oct 25 #165021

Friends

From the Chinese/English discussion 2.7. 20 continued

AS: (For seeing to arise), there must be conditions. For example, there must be the eye-sense, there must be that which impinges on it. Kamma conditions the experience of a pleasant or unpleasant object. All these dhammas are conditioned, arising and falling away, always bringing the idea of something because there is no understanding. Just one moment of seeing is so short and cannot be directly experienced. If there were no reality, there could not be the idea of "I see".

Citta is the chief or head of experiencing. It just experiences what is there only. If we just talk about the definition it's not like now, the reality of seeing which experiences.

Is seeing a cat, a bird, a crocodile, a fish or not anything? No, it's only that which arises to see. In absolute truth it cannot be taken for anything. Seeing is seeing. It's anattā, suññata.

The world is that which arises and falls away, never to return. It's only the world of fantasy (now), nimitta, thinking, dreaming. What is true is reality arising and falling away from moment to moment. Paramattha dhamma is the absolute reality, no self, no matter in what world.

Sarah

1.35 Zoom jottings 35

Sarah Abbott

Oct 30 #165074

Friends

From the Chinese/English discussion 2.7. 20 continued

The discussion about different realities continued. There were questions about ear-sense and eye-sense. It seems there are eyes and ears there all the time, just like it seems we are sitting or we are listening and thinking. There are just dhammas falling away all the time. What appears now?

It was stressed that it's useless to know a lot of books and words but not understand anything about what appears now. There should not be any hurry to understand from the books at all, but understanding what appears now is pariyatti (intellectual right understanding). Listening to anything (or reading anything) which doesn't bring understanding at this moment is not the teaching of the Buddha. It's so very subtle. It must be understanding of that which is appearing as not self.

This is the way that gradually there will be the relief from the idea of having the idea of "I" from life to life. Gradually after the development of right understanding there will be no more wrong idea of self. There has to be "no I" from the very beginning when there is a little more understanding.

Whatever arises is dhātu, an element which cannot be changed at all. There are nāma dhātu and rūpa dhātu - they cannot be any different. Their characteristics cannot be changed. That's why reality is the absolute reality. Realities are there. No one can do anything. The chief

of experiencing, the chief *nāma dhātu* is *citta*. It cannot arise alone. It needs *cetasikas* such as *phassā* which contacts the object. The chief cannot do anything, it just experiences the object, like the king. The *cetasikas* condition the *citta* to be different, for example, to be wholesome or unwholesome.

Where are you now?

Sarah

1.36 Zoom jottings 36

Sarah Abbott

Nov 1 #165090

Edited Nov 2

Friends

From the English discussion 4.7.20

Ajahn Sujin reminded us that whatever reality arises, it is only once in *saṃsāra* (the cycle of births and deaths). There is never an "I", just different realities arising and falling away. All gone!

Nina commented that *paññā* (right understanding) arises so seldom.

AS: That's the idea of self, always thinking about "I". Nothing can be done, only understanding. If there is no understanding at this moment, how can there be other moments of understanding?

Nina mentioned there's not enough, *pariyatti* (Intellectual right understanding).

AS: The question is "I" again. How long? How from? It's not a matter of thinking. What appears now is conditioned. Before *paññā*, it's ignorance.

Later it was stressed that if anyone tries not to think about self, it's there. Whatever one does in a day is for oneself. No "I" is quite a relief, letting go of the wrong understanding. *Suññata* means no thing at all.

There was also mention of *cira kāla bhāvanā* and *sakacca bhāvanā*. These refer to how long it takes before there can be understanding of

what the Buddha taught and the understanding respectfully of each word as being true.

All dhammas are anattā. Understanding the value of patience brings about all kinds of kusala (wholesome states) and good results. Paññā sees there's no need to doubt, no need to try at all. There are just saṅkhāra dhammas. If this isn't understood one just listens for oneself for "I who knows". Each word can bring the understanding of "no me", "no self". If there's no understanding and awareness now, whatever appears is gone with ignorance again.

Sarah

1.37 Zoom jottings 37

Sarah Abbott

7:30am #165124

Friends

From the English discussion 4.7.20

There was a discussion about how each reality is anattā and suññata. There is nothing permanent, nothing that can be found in saṃsāra. Whatever arose has gone completely. There is no "I", no thing, nowhere. It's a relief when there is the understanding that there's no "I", to be free from lobha, even a little. Suññata refers to the reality which falls away instantly and has completely gone. It's such a relief to be away from the idea of self. There can be listening with understanding of whatever truth can be penetrated until it's direct understanding, satipaṭṭhāna and vipassanā ñāna (insight).

There was a question about nimitta. Something is seen, that is the nimitta of what is seen. All realities appear by way of nimitta, the sign or mark of reality. There are nimittas of all conditioned realities.

We live in the world of nimitta and fantasies all the time because there is no understanding of the truth of the arising and falling away of realities. It looks like something with shape and form, so we say we see flowers and a table but there must be the absolute reality which

only appears by way of nimitta. It's made known by concepts, such as "flowers" and "table". The concepts make known what appears and the reality doesn't appear as it is.

Sarah

1.38 Zoom jottings 38

Sarah Abbott

7:33am #165125

Friends

From the English discussion 4.7.20

There were some questions raised about some conventional situations. Ajahn Sujin stressed that trying to solve the problems of the world by ways other than the development of the path taught by the Buddha don't work at all. This is because there is no understanding of the truth.

All questions can be answered by understanding what appears now. Where is the world?

Sarah

2

Zoom Meetings

2.1 Meeting on line, 1

nina

Apr 12 #162464

Dear friends,

Because of all the emotions I forgot to turn on my recorder. I was excited seeing you all. My Dutch friends were so interested so I might as well write a report, using my quick notes. I put my own thoughts between brackets.

Again, I express my thankfulness to Sarah and Jon who organised the meeting, it must have been a lot of work behind the scene. Sarah referred to me our discussion on dsg about superstition, thinking of a dear one who passed away and looks after us on high. It is only thinking and speculating about a story. Also this thinking is just a dhamma and gone already. Whatever the stories in life we are involved in, let us not

forget the reality of the present moment. Seeing now, hearing now, only conditioned dhammas. Whatever question is asked, it can always be brought back to the present moment.

Sarah: whatever is conditioned cannot be any other way.

Nina: a good reminder, also in relation to Corona. We have to be careful, but it helps to have less fear when realizing that it cannot be any other way.

Jeff: seeing and hearing, different realities. A problem: having accumulated thinking with worry.

Nina: I did not catch the answer, but if I understood rightly your remark, also that is only, only a conditioned dhamma. Perhaps then we attach less importance to that. (Nice to see you live after reading your posts.)

Minh, speaking about no control. He understood well that pariyatti is not yet direct understanding.

Ann: emphasizing patience in the development of right understanding.

Sarah: trying to be aware of rupa or feeling, that is impatience. Lack of confidence, thinking that it can be done.

Sundara: reading suttas can so easily be done with wrong understanding. The meaning is so subtle.

Sarah: There are conventional ideas about patience. It can be unwholesome patience.

Sundara: we do not realize when. There is conceit, when thinking of what others are doing. Only by understanding dhamma we can know the meaning of the suttas. There can be confidence in the subtlety of the teachings. It is more elusive than we would think. _____Nina.

2.2 meeting on line, 2

nina

Apr 12 #162465

Dear friends,

Huong: Hearing now, seeing now, nothing can be changed.

Sarah: No matter the circumstances.

(Nina: good reminder: Corona now, but reality is reality, we shouldn't forget this. No matter the circumstances.)

Jonothan: pañña verifies the truth, that is the function of pañña. Conventional understanding is different from verification in the ultimate sense, which is a matter of pañña. This takes a long time.

(Nina: here patience comes in, the development of pañña cannot be hastened)

Sarah: Seeing now. Confidence develops together with understanding. When understanding is not firm there are doubts. In the ultimate sense there is no supermarket, no missing toilet rolls.

As to the satipatthana sutta: we should ask ourselves: what is seen now? Is it a table? Just what is visible should be known.

Jonothan: Is there any verification now? For conventional verification no understanding of dhamma is required. there is the idea of: I see now, I hear now. The best verification is a moment of awareness and insight that has a characteristic of reality as object. Visible object is just the object of seeing-consciousness.

Sarah: What is dhamma now? There is sound now, can it be verified that it is just sound? A moment of understanding is the beginning of verification. It is not a conventional idea of: I can hear the voice of the speaker.

Jonothan: It is a beginning level of wisdom. Repeated listening is necessary.

(Nina: very good reminder:again and again).

Nina

2.3 Meeting on line, 3

nina

Apr 12 #162466

Dear friends,

Sarah: living alone: just a moment of seeing. (N:I am reflecting on this when not seeing a living soul for a few days. Citta is always alone. We are born alone, die alone.)

Question: santirana-citta at rebirth is not accompanied by pleasant feeling (as may be the case when it performs the function of investigating in a process). Why?

Sarah explained: it is a very weak vipaka (result of kamma). In the case of a stronger vipaka in the sense sphere, the vipakacittas are with two or three roots and then they can be accompanied by pleasant feeling, and in that case the function of rebirth is not performed by santiranacitta.

Question (from Vietnam): Shall I go or not go to the supermarket?

Sarah: Each moment is conditioned. Anatta. Just a dhamma that thinks. Because of past memory there is thinking. We think it is “I” who goes to the supermarket.

Discussion with little Nam and his brother about seeing and hearing with ignorance. (Nam showed great interest)

Jonothan to Nam: There is not anything to do, understanding can develop gradually. There is seeing and the object of seeing, and these are different objects of understanding. It is difficult to understand at first. Consider more and there will be more understanding.

Sarah asked Nam: What is heard how? Can you hear a voice?

Nam: Just sound.

Sarah: And then we can think of the meaning of words. Usually after hearing there is attachment instantly. Attachment after seeing, hearing, etc., all day. If there wouldn't be a discussion about it you would not know.

(N: As I said, a child can understand deep dhamma, age does not matter.)

Nina.

2.4 Meeting on line II, 1

nina

Apr 21 #162621

Dear friends,

N: When we do not consider the present moment, this leads to wrong interpretation of the Tipitaka. The teachings are not theoretical, for example, the precepts. One may think: I want to keep the precepts. What are citta, cetasika and rupa now? It is not the words, not what is in the books. The Buddha asked: is seeing impermanent? He did not mean impermanence in general, but at this moment. I am grateful to hear about this more and more, because we keep on forgetting it.

Jon: What is appearing at present, rather than in the book should be known.

Sarah: Life before and after corona: there are lock downs etc. This is just conventional thinking. In the absolute sense there is no difference. There is delirious thinking(thinking with unwholesomeness) now: about the virus, what will happen, how many cases are there. Realities are exactly the same as before Corona. Seeing and thinking, fantasy world, long stories.

Sarah said about studying the Dependent Origination: If there is no understanding about seeing now, it is not useful to study the details of the Dependent Origination. There is an idea of “I can practise, I can follow”. The discussion has to come back to now.

Jon: Understand the present moment rather than think of stories.

Nina: This is so helpful. We keep on thinking of Corona with anxiety, of being contaminated, but there are only citta, cetasika and rupa, and these change each moment.

Alan speaks about the importance of intellectual understanding: Without a lot of intellectual understanding there will be the idea of “me” doing something. There should be a balance : between learning details and knowing the present moment.

Jon: Some of the realities the Buddha speaks about will be appearing, some will not. Seeing experiences visible object, but not all realities appear.

Sarah: No need to use the word pariyatti (intellectual understanding) but consider what life is at this moment. There can be wise reflection. At this moment there is not direct understanding of seeing, but

there can be a beginning of wise reflection that there is just this moment of seeing that sees and then gone. Not an “I” that can see or hear. If one would not hear about it, it would not be known. But having heard about it there can be wise reflection. Life carries on as usual. We take precautions, avoid gatherings etc. But there can be understanding at any moment.

Alan: what is the purpose of Abhidhamma? It is very detailed, consisting of seven books and commentaries.

Sarah: No matter the Suttas, the Vinaya, or the Abhidhamma, the purpose is to understand life now, realities as not self, as anatta. If we just hear: seeing sees visible object, it is not enough. The understanding has to develop deeper to eradicate the idea of self. This is the purpose of the details. Seeing is the result of kamma and then the wholesome or unwholesome cittas follow, which are cause, are different from result (such as seeing). We learn more details for the purpose of understanding. No “I” who does anything, or who experiences anything.

Details are important, for the purpose of not “I”, not self. It does not matter we call it Abhidhamma, Sutta, pariyatti or anything. Just details for the understanding of life now, directly realized by the Buddha.

Alan: We understand, in order to correct misunderstandings. There is a lot of misintepretation of the teachings, of wrong practice. This is an advantage of knowing details too.

Nina.

2.5 Meeting on line, II, 2

nina

Apr 22 #162630

Dear friends,

Sarah: What is knowing Abhidhamma?

Alan: there is the inclination to try, to select an object, to go to a special place. Then you can refer to the Abhidhamma, stating that you

begin with detachment. You can show details, show that this is wrong practice.

Sarah: I do not think that this is knowing Abhidhamma. To me, seeing now, hearing now, attachment, aversion, reality now, each one is Abhidhamma. Knowing Abhidhamma means understanding this moment. A theoretical discussion is not knowing Abhidhamma at this moment

Nina: people think only of the book, but it is really about this moment. It is good to talk about seeing and hearing all the time. We are seeing and hearing now, but we forget that it is not in the book. It is this moment. We talk about this moment; “this moment”, it can be very vague when we say this. It is good to discuss this more. I find questions from beginners and children very helpful.

Betty: This moment is already gone. How can there be awareness of this moment? Usually there is reflection after the moment has passed.

Sarah: That is why we talk about different levels of understanding. In the beginning it is not direct understanding of seeing or visible object. There has to be wise consideration of the nature of seeing. Seeing has gone, but as understanding develops it gets closer to directly understand the reality.

Jon: It is conditioned to understand, not because we are trying to understand or to focus on what is appearing at the present moment. The function of understanding is to understand what is presently there. There are certain conditions for the arising of understanding.

Betty: Understanding always arises after the moment a reality presents itself.

Nina: It does not matter that it is ready gone. Very closely afterwards the characteristic can still appear. It is important to know that seeing is not thinking about people and all the things we notice. If there is not wise reflection about the difference, *pañña* (understanding) can never develop. It all depends on *pañña* to condition right awareness. It is better not to think too much about it, such as “how can I?”, “I have to try and how is it possible?”

Sarah: that is the trap of attachment: “How can I understand exactly the moment when reality arises.”

Jon (to Alan): Is there a need to deal with Abhidhamma separately from the suttas?

Alan: Without a basic understanding of Abhidhamma one cannot understand the suttas. How can you understand realities without the Abhidhamma. We get from the Abhidhamma what the very beginning of satipatthana is and what the object (of satipatthana) is. What is real and what is a concept. That understanding is very difficult to get from the suttas alone.

Jon: It is there. In the Sutta all different dhatus (elements) are to be understood. The elements, the khandhas, dhamma in different classifications are to be understood. We could not read Abhidhamma and Sutta by ourselves. We need others who have the same interest and can help us to understand what it is all about.

Nina.

2.6 Meeting on line, II, 3

nina

Apr 23 #162640

Dear friends,

Acharn Sujin speaking about reality right now:

Without hearing the teachings it is impossible.

Alan: How many details we need to know?

Acharn: There are seeing and visible object, no “I” who can have them at will. Sati-sampajañña (sati en pañña) and satipatthana do not arise yet because there are no conditions for their arising. Right understanding knows that this is not satipatthana. When times comes satipatthana arises by conditions, it arises by conditions. Everything arises by conditions. All cetasikas (mental factors), manasikara (attention) included, are now developing by themselves, not by anyone. The other cetasikas that arise with pañña develop, now. No one is there.

Hearing, pariyatti (intellectual understanding), patipatti (direct understanding), pativedha (direct realization) are not anyone. (One should be) aware of anything, no selection. It (can) appear just as it is. Visible object, no thing in it.

Everything is appearing as some “thing”, not as it is. It is not easy to understand, but this is the way. At the very beginning, from hearing, considering, before it can be understood. So it is not “I”. Right understanding can be developed little by little, so very little. Just one moment of understanding is accumulated, by conditions.

Sarah: Alan, you talked about finding a balance, should we study more details? That is the idea of “I”. It is just thinking by conditions, each moment is conditioned.

Sarah to Michael (a newcomer): we are talking about what life is at this moment. We think that life is different because of the Corona virus. But any time there is just seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. We used to think that I can see, such as many faces on the screen. Seeing just sees what is visible, not I who sees. Without the development of understanding it can never be known. Does this make sense to you?

Michael: yes, it is very digestible.

Sarah: What is touched at this moment?

Michael: I am aware of my own ignorance.

Sarah: It has to come back to this moment, that is all we know. We think we see people and the ocean, and then there is thinking. Seeing sees just what is visible. There is hearing now, just the sound is heard. That is the world at this moment. The world is not Corona virus. The world is just a moment of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking.

There are many moments of thinking. We think that we can touch a computer. Where is the computer? Just in our imagination. Hardness or softness is touched. The Buddha’s teaching is just about life at this moment, no matter we call it Abhidhamma or sutta, with Pali, English or Vietnamese words. This is basic of all the teachings.

Trin: Understanding of the intellectual level can condition understanding of moments now, seeing, hearing, as not self. The Abhidhamma helps us to understand that there is nobody there, just dhammas. Patience to listen, patience to understand.

Nina.

2.7 Meeting on line, II, 4

nina

Apr 23 #162641

Dear friends,

Jon: To come back to how many details we have to know. There is no answer to this. It varies from one individual to another.

Maeve: Ignorance is conditioned, we do not want to have it. It is real, it can be useful. It tells us about the lack of understanding. I appreciate this more and more.

Sarah: the more understanding there is, the more ignorance becomes apparent. Before studying the teachings there was no idea of any ignorance.

Jon: We are concerned about our level of understanding. It is not a question of having more understanding; awareness arises only by conditions. Interest in the teachings, in having a discussion, this is conditioned to arise.

Azita: What are accumulations?

Sarah: Attachment now is accumulated from the past, and it will condition more attachment in the future. There is accumulation of all wholesome and unwholesome mental factors. After seeing, wholesome and unwholesome mental states arise. When they arise they condition the same. Understanding now, wise reflection now condition more understanding and wise reflection in the future, by accumulation.

Azita: While walking in the bush I focus on different flowers. Focussing on a certain plant, is that by accumulation?

Sarah: Attachment to and interest in flowers is accumulated. When we are swimming , some people like stories, fishes, the sunrise. It depends on interest and attachment what is accumulated.

Azita: When we see how different we are it may help kindness and tolerance.

Sarah: They do not belong to a person, they are just different realities that are conditioned.

Alan: Does accumulation condition seeing and hearing? We see now. That is: we are interested in that.

Srah: Many conditions are involved: kamma, visible object, eye-sense condition seeing. At the moment of seeing there is no attachment. Immediately after seeing interest and attachment arise, by conditions. Even in a sense-door process. It does not belong to anyone.

Jon: the object that is seen is not conditioned by accumulated tendency, but the reaction to it is.

Alan: We are hearing sound while listening to Dhamma. But listening to that sound is by accumulations. There are many conditions to support the hearing of the sound. It has to be conditioned by interest as well.

Sarah: Past kamma conditions the experiencing of sound and there are many other conditions. Ignorance is also an indirect condition for each reality that arises now.

Jon: speaking in conventional sense: as to joining in a Dhamma discussion, one's interest has been accumulated and is a condition.

Jon repeats Sun's question on wholesome and unwholesome *sañña* (remembrance). The mental factors (*cetasikas*) can also be wholesome or unwholesome. How can one know *sañña*, how can one know whether it is wholesome or unwholesome?

Sarah: Usually *sañña* does not commonly appear. A moment of wise reflection on Dhamma is only possible because of memory. That memory is different from memory with attachment or anger. *Sañña* is conditioned by all the other mental factors that arise with it.

Nina: The *citta* arises and falls away so fast, it is impossible to catch that moment. We should not try, that is of no use. It is good to know that all is conditioned, *anatta*. Only *pañña*, when it is more developed, can distinguish between what is wholesome and unwholesome. We should not try to find out.

Alan: Is it right to say: understanding of realities now is conditioned by *sañña*?

Sarah: Without *sañña* there could not be any thinking, or memory of the meaning of words.

Alan: What conditions right awareness at that very moment? Is it the memory of the intellectual understanding? *Sañña* has a part to play in a moment of insight.

Sarah: Right *sañña* is often given as a proximate cause of awareness.

Nina.

2.8 Meeting on line, III, 1

nina

Apr 27 #162745

Dear friends,

Nina: The time before and after Corona we talked about is a good example that shows the difference between thinking of “stories” and understanding realities. Seeing and hearing arise, no matter what the circumstances are, they are realities. Hearing is always hearing (before or after Corona). It is good to be reminded. When we are absorbed in stories we keep on forgetting realities.

All of your remarks were very useful. Maeve said that ignorance is useful, when you realize how much ignorance there is. Before we studied the teachings, we did not realize this. Trin reminded us that patience is so important. We like to understand everything immediately, but this is not possible. All of your remarks are useful, reminding us of reality. I am looking forward to them. Alan had questions about the usefulness of knowing details. After seeing there is straight away the arising of the intoxicants (very subtle defilements). We did not realize that after seeing now, hearing now already ignorance or wrong view arise. They may be very subtle, we do not notice them. It is very good to know our amount of ignorance.

Lukas: Besides realities there is also conventional life, such as dana. We are giving to someone on the street who is hungry.

Nina: It all depends on the citta (consciousness) at that moment. It is not wholesome when we like to gain something or we want approval. Citta is complicated and very detailed. The Buddha explained all the subtle points and details of citta. The more we study, the more it is helpful for daily life, also for conventional life. We often forget that, we are totally absorbed in stories.

Jon: there are different levels of kusala (wholesomeness). Dana is one kind of wholesomeness, depending on consciousness, not the (out-

ward)act.

Sundara: Understanding supports all levels of wholesomeness, be it dana or sila.

Sarah: Without understanding, how do we know what is dana? For Jon's birthday I made a gift. There are so many different moments involved: kindness, attachment, hoping that he will be happy. Without understanding we take all such moments for wholesome. My kindness, my giving. They are different realities, not mine.

Nina.

2.9 Meeting on line III,2

nina

Apr 28 #162765

Dear friends,

Trin: If you want to explain Dhamma, there is dana, higher dhamma, kindness, these are also conditioned. It is not so simple. Sometimes you give for "self", there is a lot of attachment.

Lukas: I stopped studying the Abhidhamma.

Trin: When there is a little moment of kindness, there is no self there.

Sarah: Each moment is conditioned. If you go out in the street and you see someone who is hungry, each moment is conditioned. If you make an offering or do not make it, thinking, all are conditioned. Like now, who knows who will answer your question or make a comment? What is dhamma now? Is there seeing now, kindness now? When you think of a person who is hungry in the street, there is just thinking of a story.

Maeve: Once dhamma is planted, does it flourish?

Jon: It depends on conditions.

Maeve: What encourages it to flourish?

Jon: there can be interest in different ways. One may be academically inclined or one may be poor and uneducated.

Sarah: Only when understanding is really firm can it condition direct understanding of realities. In the beginning it is not firm, one follows other interests. One needs discussion, one forgets life at this moment. One thinks a lot of stories, such as, what will I do when I meet a beggar on the street? One needs reminders, and keep reflecting and considering about the purpose (of study). There is no self at this moment.

Maeve: One listens, sometimes with confidence, sometimes not. Hearing the Dhamma discussed is a great way.

Sarah: in the discussions one has one's own ideas questioned. When one listens just on one's own, one believes that one has understood. When one is questioned one realizes that it is not understood. Questioning is helpful.

Sundara: one needs to be incredibly patient and this itself is conditioned. Listen carefully, consider carefully, and then there can be more conditions for understanding. We cannot hurry up the Dhamma. We cannot make understanding grow as we like.

Nina.

2.10 Meeting on line III, 3

nina

Apr 29 #162787

Dear friends,

Acharn: How can one know that there is right understanding? Daily life is the examination of how much understanding of dhamma there is. Dhamma is not in the book, it is now. Seeing right now is dhamma. The accumulation of right understanding can have conditions to arise, there should be no expectation. We read a lot but the understanding of realities is different from book knowledge. Now from book knowledge we understand theoretically that there is no one. How can this moment be no self, no one? It depends on conditions. Those who have attained enlightenment understand the arising and falling away (of realities), not "I" at all. To what extent can the understanding of daily life be known as

not me, at this moment of seeing, instead of thinking of cetasikas? From hearing there can be the considering of what appears. It can condition the understanding of no self. The development of understanding has to be very gradual, and it has to be truthful, sacca parami (the perfection of truthfulness). How much understanding is there of the characteristic of no self, right now? There should be no regret while thinking how much or how little understanding there is. It is the understanding which is conditioned. Begin to understand that which experiences and that which cannot experience.

Lukas: I did not study Dhamma for a long time. How can I come back to study?

Acharn: It is always I. Do not forget the second noble Truth which is lobha. It is there after seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. There are the asavas (intoxicants, very subtle defilements) of clinging to sense objects, to existence, of wrong view and of ignorance. Seeing experiences, we do not have to name it seeing. Visible object appears to seeing, it is conditioned and then gone. The accumulation of understanding stemming from hearing again and again conditions a moment of understanding. In the beginning it is just thinking, not clear understanding of the reality that experiences all the time. So long as conditions are not enough yet it is impossible to really penetrate the truth of it.

It is not desire, it is the understanding that has to be this moment, it is gone all the time. The desire is all around. The understanding that it is anatta cannot be controlled. It can become less, just very, very little. Citta and cetasika are now, by conditions, uncontrollable.

Intellectual understanding conditions not being forgetful of what is now appearing, by conditions, uncontrollable, no self. Such as wanting to come back to study; this has been accumulated from life to life, so that it can be known as that which leads us to the wrong way. It is attached to the cycle of birth and death, to nama and rupa now.

Right understanding can begin to understand it as it is. It becomes less and less, just a little.

Nina.

2.11 Meeting on line III, 4

nina

Apr 30 #162795

Dear friends,

Jeff (reacting to Acharn's explanations): It is clear to me. When giving food to someone who is hungry, it may be with attachment (lobha) or with kindness. One may give with the idea of "I am a good person." Or with kindness, you do not care if someone notices (your giving).

Acharn: It is by conditions whether or not you give. The study of the teachings is a like a reminder. Learn to understand conditions. That is most difficult. The Buddha's Path leads to less clinging. Whatever one gets is with lobha. At the moment of not giving it is not "me". If one tries to change there is "I" again, all the time. Pañña understands kusala and akusala. Nothing can be controlled. Giving or not giving is not me. Do not regret or think of the future. The past has gone, it is not the object of understanding. The future has not come yet. Now, it can be understood what experiences and what cannot experience. Only these two kind of realities, arising by conditions. The past is not remembered in the next life and even in this life can the past not come back to be object of understanding. The object has to be just right then. One cannot force the arising of satipatthana, but pañña can understand when there is satipatthana and when not.

Satipatthana is the development of understanding. It is just a reality which is different from other realities. It arises with sobhana (beautiful) citta. The point of listening and understanding is: no "I".

We do not mind how long it takes, 20 years or many lives. It depends on the understanding. It has to be the understanding of no self.

There is lobha all day, it is hidden all the time. Only pañña can see it. It is the condition for the cycle of birth and death.

Dhamma is not self. Only pañña can penetrate the truth. Intellectual understanding will lead to pañña that understands just one characteristic of reality at a time. One will know the difference between understanding from hearing and understanding of one reality at a time. The latent tendency of doubt is only eradicated by the path-consciousness of

the sotapanna (at the first stage of enlightenment). Pañña will see the difference between self and no self, between wrong understanding and right understanding.

Huong: A question about ayatana as meeting place.

Acharn: Is there seeing right now?

Huong: Yes.

Acharn: What is there at the moment of seeing?

Huong: Visible object.

Acharn: Without visible object can there be seeing?

Huong: No.

Acharn: So, ayatana means meeting point. At the moment of seeing there are many realities. They are there already. What are there at this moment: ayatana. We learn: not me. No one can control.

Sarah: Seeing is ayatana, visible object is ayatana. What other realities are there at this moment? There have to be eyesense, and also cetasikas (mental factors). All together, each one is ayatana. It is now. Seeing now, memory, contact. All are coming together or associating.

Sundara: appreciates that Acharn brought the question to the present moment. That is a valuable reminder.

Sarah: there is no point in talking about ayatana, unless we talk about this moment.

Nina.

2.12 Meeting on line, III, 5

nina

May 1 #162799

Dear friends,

Azita asks about the four foundations of mindfulness. Is investigation of states (dhammas) the fourth foundation?

Nina: all realities that are included or not included (here I had to correct myself) in the first three foundations of mindfulness are the fourth foundation of mindfulness, mindfulness of dhammas. Here they

are dealt with under different aspects, such as the khandhas (aggregates). We do not have to think of those four foundations. They are real at this moment, and we may forget this. People make it more complicated than it is.

The four applications of mindfulness is one of the two conditions for sati and pañña (sati-sampajañña). The other condition is firm remembrance of what we heard and learnt. All that is real at this moment.

Jon: They are foundations, because they are the objects of mindfulness. The fourth one is translated as mindfulness of dhammas, not investigation of dhammas (that is another aspect).

Lukas: Acharn has a nice voice.

Sarah: Even while listening to Dhamma there can be attachment.

Alan: A question about the Middle Way and this moment.

Sarah: Understanding seeing now, hearing now, attachment now, that is the Middle Way. It is the right Path, understanding of that reality as not self.

Alan: Why is it called the Middle Way?

Sarah: There is no wrong view. Understanding of that reality as not self.

Jon: No indulgence nor ascetism.

Alan: It is another way of saying: any moment of life, such as when listening to music.

Sarah: Intellectual understanding of dhamma now leads to sati-patthana: direct understanding of reality now.

Alan: Often there is an idea of situation, such as going shopping or being in the forest. It makes no difference as to understanding realities. Hardness is hardness when you are in the street or in the forest. Thinking in terms of situation is not the Middle Way.

Sarah: When Lukas asked: “How can I come back to the Dhamma”, there was the idea of self. Evenso when asking, “How can I get more understanding, shall I go to the forest, to the meditation center..” Because there is not the understanding of seeing now. If there is no understanding of reality now, it cannot lead to the Middle Way. It has to be this moment.

Sun: With Vietnamese friends we discussed about the Vinaya. It is very detailed about situations and about the conduct of the monk, such

as looking ahead not further than the length of a plough, not looking around. How to have more wise reflection about all this? What is wise reflection when studying the Vinaya?

Sarah: Walking along with eyes downcast is just a physical action one is following. There is “I” again, one can do this with attachment. It has to be with understanding of reality at this moment. It has to be kusala citta with understanding.

Nina: The Vinaya is useful also for laypeople. There are so many occasions for attachment. It is not a question of following rules but knowing citta. Decorating one’s dwelling is not allowed (for the monk). It is good to know that there is attachment when decorating our house. There is no need to force ourselves not to do so, but (know) there is citta with attachment. All these different examples are very useful, also for laypeople.

Sarah: People think it is just a matter of following rules. It has to be with understanding of dhammas as anatta.

Questioner, a remark: The Buddha taught the second noble Truth, attachment. It is important to understand this. It is a reminder not to run after objects and create more problems.

Nina: It is all about the Middle Way. That is the Middle Way. Not forcing, but understanding.

Sundara: It is a reminder, all these different dhammas. When walking with downcast eyes, there can be mindfulness in conventional sense, knowing what one is doing. This can be a condition for sati and pañña instead of more attachment.

Jon: wise consideration refers to wholesome consciousness. There is no answer to the question whether there is wholesomeness while doing this or that. Kusala citta can be dana, sila, or restraint from unwholesome conduct.

Nina: I appreciate Acharn’s constant reminder that the development of understanding has to be natural in daily life. One should not try to change one’s life style.

Alan: Understanding realities in the present moment, is that taking refuge in the teachings?

Sarah: If there is no understanding of life now, can there be a beginning of the Middle Way? If one just goes to the temple and kneels down without any understanding there cannot be any beginning.

Alan: Taking refuge, you go to safety by listening and considering the teachings.

Sarah: Only the understanding that leads to the end of the cycle of birth and death can be a refuge. The more understanding there is, the more appreciation of the Buddha's teaching of realities.

Nina.

2.13 Meeting on line III, 6

nina

May 2 #162810

Dear friends,

Nguyen (ten year old child): a question about offering a gift and thinking of the benefit, and about the fact that there is also a moment of attachment.

Sarah: We talked about the perfections (wholesome qualities the Bodhisatta accumulated from life to life) that develop together with understanding. If there is no understanding of seeing as not self, of kindness, of generosity as not self, there cannot be the development of the perfections. Kindness has to develop with understanding. Without understanding it cannot be a perfection.

Jon: In any situation there can be wholesome and unwholesome states intermingled. Only the wholesome ones can be a perfection when they are with some level of understanding.

Sarah to Nguyen: Is there any perfection now? That is homework for you, you can think about it. I hope Nam (older brother) can help explain the answer. Nam really appreciates this discussion, helping us to understand Dhamma and what is happening right now.

You are a very good older brother to him.

Acharn, about taking refuge: Before hearing the Buddha, who knows (this moment) now as not self? That is why we take refuge. Without hearing there cannot be understanding. At the moment of understanding the words of the Buddha, even one word, one takes refuge in the

Buddha and in the Dhamma. No one (else) can condition right understanding.

There is a beginning of understanding of what has not been understood before, until all realities appear as not self. No one else can help us to have understanding of whatever appears. That is why one takes refuge, more and more, to understand the Buddha's words.

Alan: We take refuge from what? From realities which are suffering?

Acharn: Consider his words carefully. He just points to this very moment. Each moment is gone. No one can understand it by himself.

Alan: The ultimate refuge is nibbana.

Acharn: This is unknown for uncountable lives.

Alan: We are attached to what arises, but Nibbana does not arise, and it cannot be the object of attachment.

Acharn: One is attached to everything, except lokuttara dhammas (supramundane dhammas: the cittas that experience Nibbana and nibbana). There is attachment that hinders to understand what arises, because of the intoxicants (asavas, very subtle defilements). After a few moments of seeing, hearing, etc. the asavas arise. They are unknown, because they are very subtle. There is attachment when thinking: "I want to know this, how to know that". Even thinking right then is not self.

Alan: While experiencing nibbana, attachment is eliminated.

Acharn: Can you experience nibbana? What level of pañña can experience nibbana?

Alan: A high level.

Acharn: a level of insight (vipassana ñana). No idea about it when satipatthana is not developed yet. The second noble Truth (lobha, attachment) should be object of pañña. Only pañña can experience all four noble Truths. When there is an idea of "I do", it is wrong.

Understanding from moment to moment is to eliminate ignorance and doubt. It is about now, all the time. Are you taking refuge?

Alan: To some extent, for sure, because I am listening and considering.

Acharn: At the moment of understanding there is no self, no doubt about taking refuge.

Sarah: Alan also asked about the Middle Way and I said: the moment of understanding now, not anything else.

Acharn: Is there any way now? The Middle Way is different from other ways. Without understanding, nothing can be the Middle Way. The Middle Way means: no attachment, no aversion. When one thinks: “I would like to understand” there is attachment and that is not the Middle Way.

Alberto: The refuge is understanding realities little by little.

Nina.

2.14 Meeting on line IV, 1

nina

May 4 #162848

Dear friends,

Nina: Last time we received reminders all the time: Understanding this moment, taking refuge, and as Acharn said: Dhamma is now. My niece phoned me and asked whether in this group the mood is not depressed because of Corona. I said: on the contrary, it is very animated, while speaking about seeing now, hearing now. And as Alan said: hardness is hardness, no matter what the situation is. We think in terms of situation, such as, I am in my dusty house or in the forest. It makes no difference.

Long sent me an Email, asking what the difference is between the Middle Way and taking refuge. It all pertains to this moment. When we take refuge, the object is not a concept, it is understanding reality at this moment. It is not about situations, like we are greeting each other and laughing. They are all nama and rupa. We are so forgetful and it is good to discuss more. There is the reality that experiences and the reality that does not experience. People may wonder why we should discuss these two kinds of reality.

Acharn: When there is no understanding we cannot take refuge. From the very beginning there should be understanding of whatever appears now. Realities appear but there is no understanding. If there is no understanding it is impossible to follow the Middle Way. The way of

ignorance and attachment cannot lead to understanding. Right thinking (*samma-sankappa*) accompanies right view (*samma-ditthi*). Understanding is the chief, and *virati* (abstention from unwholesomeness) is also needed.

Sarah: We were friendly, chatting and greeting each other, in a natural way. We were not going to a special place; the development of understanding has to be natural from the start.

Acharn: It is natural, no one can condition the arising of a reality, it has already arisen and fallen away. It has to be developed little by little. There should not be any expectation, no wish. It can appear well. There is no ignorance that hides the truth.

Sarah: As to the phone call with Nina's niece, there are different moments, some with enthusiasm, some moments are sad, some happy. Just different realities, no self. Nothing lasts.

Acharn: The idea of self is very strong, it can condition *akusala*, like moments of being depressed. It is gone. No self but different realities, conditioned. There is no "I" who tries to understand.

Sarah: One should not try to change what is conditioned, just understand.

Sarah, to Simin and Carmen(from Holland): The development of understanding is very natural, not trying to do something. How does this sound to you?

Simin: It is not so easy to stay aware, to be aware of conditions. Fear, Corona, so many conditions make it difficult to stay with understanding. Understanding is very important.

Sarah (to Acharn): She has studied *Abhidhamma* and agrees that understanding now is very important, but it is very difficult to stay aware, because different things come up by conditions, like Corona.

Acharn: If there cannot be the understanding of whatsoever appears now, realities that arise are the same, like seeing or hearing. Very soon after they have arisen there are the intoxicants (*asavas*) of clinging to sense objects, clinging to existence, of wrong view and ignorance. They arise and fall away so fast, they cannot be known.

Sarah: Staying aware is not the natural way. Trying to do something, thinking that there should be awareness now when there is depression or attachment. It is not a matter of staying aware, but understanding

of what is conditioned. Otherwise “I” am doing something or following a practice.

Acharya: Where are you now? Alone or with many people?

Simin: I am now in Holland.

Acharya: That is exactly the same. Seeing is seeing, no matter you are in Holland or wherever. When realities appear, there is no place. Thinking of a place is taking you away from understanding reality right now, Seeing is seeing, wherever you are. There is the reality that experiences and the reality that does not experience.

When there is strong confidence (in the teachings) there is no place. There are conditions for whatever arises now. Ignorance arises wherever one is, depending on conditions. Understanding can arise, little by little. What falls away does not return. It takes a long time to know the truth. What appears now is very, very subtle, no one can understand it immediately. Learn to understand it when it is there. When it is not there how can there be understanding of it? It is just that, no one. It takes more than one life, more than hundred lives, to really penetrate the truth of it. The idea of self is very deeply rooted as intoxicant, as latent tendency or as other types of akusala.

Nina.

2.15 Meeting on line, IV, 2

nina

May 5 #162854

Dear friends,

Sarah wants to explain the terms intoxicant (asava) and latent tendency (anusaya) for the benefit of newcomers. When you look at a lotus flower or at friends, there is attachment instantly. But there are also very subtle kinds of attachment and these are intoxicants. Immediately after seeing or hearing ignorance arises. When looking at the computer there is seeing and then very subtle kinds of ignorance. Or one may be

wishing to see, wishing to be, very subtle kinds of wrong view of self. These are moments of intoxicants, asavas.

As to latent tendency, anusaya, depression suddenly arises, out of the blue. Or attachment. A tendency for those unwholesome states lies dormant but it is ready to condition their arising. That is why we listen to Dhamma, the condition for understanding can arise any time, like now.

Sukin: The Middle Way is a moment of right understanding. Is there a difference between the Middle Way and taking refuge? What reality is the taking of refuge?

Acharn: Can ignorance take refuge? The understanding knows that there are different realities performing their functions. When seeing appears nothing can appear together with seeing. But different realities seem to appear together, they appear as “something” all the time. Now is the moment of testing the truth that is known from hearing: is there wholesomeness or not?

Sarah: Understanding the reality of life at this moment as not self is the Middle Way. This leads to taking refuge in the qualities of the Buddha. Without understanding this would just be the following of a kind of ritual.

Jon: Different aspects refer to the development of understanding, such as a sense of urgency (samvega).

Sukin: How easy it is to go wrong, such as when thinking of the difference between understanding and taking refuge.

Jon: There are many different aspects to understanding. Realities are classified in different ways, as khandhas, as elements. One should always come back to the actual reality at the present moment. These are different ways of helping us to have a better understanding.

Minh had a question about right considering.

Acharn: Who or what is considering right now?

Sarah: Is it self or dhamma that considers?

The idea of self is so deeply rooted. It seems that I can hear, I can consider. There are just moments of hearing and thinking of what is heard. Just different dhammas. It depends on conditions what kind of thinking arises and considers wisely or unwisely.

Nina: I appreciate it so much that Acharn always goes back to dhamma now. She asked (Lukas): Is it not an idea of self who wants

to return to Dhamma? Just as Lukas, we all have moments that we are wondering about something. Acharn reminds us all the time that this is a reality, not self. It is good to be reminded again and again because we forget.

I think that “I” consider the Dhamma, while wondering whether this is a reality that experiences or that does not experience. How to find out, how to consider this. All the time it is still a subtle idea of self. If the Buddha had not taught about non-self we would not know it at all. It is good to know.

Jon: When we are happy or sad, there are happy feeling or unhappy feeling and these are dhammas arising by conditions. It is consciousness(citta) that considers.

Sarah: There is a trap all the time when we say that we keep on reminding ourselves. There is a subtle idea of following a practice or trying to do something. It is not just understanding this moment.

Minh: Can you give an example of wise considering?

Jon: A wholesome consciousness that reflects on the Dhamma that is heard. Not a situation.

Maeve: I appreciate the reminders. We think that there is wise considering, but it is not so. It is enough to know what experiences and what does not experience anything.

Nina.

2.16 Meeting on line, IV, 3

nina

May 6 #162877

Dear friends,

Sukin speaks about the threefold classification of pañña as suta-mayapañña, pañña based on hearing, cinta-mayapañña, pañña based on thinking, bhavana-mayapañña, pañña based on development.

Sukin : I hear from Acharn that only understanding of what appears matters. Otherwise we become forgetful. We are depressed or we worry

because we are lost in concepts. We need to hear and then there can be understanding. Hearing and considering happens even now. It has to be on and on, a lot.

Sarah: Hearing conditions to consider more carefully. We should not try to remember, but reflecting can be natural. Hearing can be a condition any time, unexpectedly.

Alan: We listen, hear and think, and does this conform to reality? We hear that hardness is just hardness. We can verify this, not just by thinking. It has to be tested against reality now. We hear that all conditioned realities are uncontrollable. This has to be tested. We have a pleasant feeling, not by choice but by conditions. The Buddha said that attachment conditions aversion. The truth of what he taught, all of it shows up. There are many words to explain anatta, not self, such as uncontrollable, unexpectedly. We should not just know the words, but the reality: not somebody, not something.

Ann: Conditioned by past accumulations there will be listening. The more one listens, the more one understands.

Trin: Acharya said that if one just hears the Dhamma and not considers but just believes, one will forget (what one heard). There will not be understanding. Considering will condition more understanding, little by little and then it can condition further understanding.

Alberto: Considering is not just thinking about the teachings. It is more subtle than just thinking which is always with “me” and “I”.

Sarah: It is not just repeating words and memorizing. That is just to be forgotten, as Trin said. It has to be understanding.

Azita: What is citta vipallasa, perversity of citta?

Sarah: Thinking with any kind of unwholesomeness is citta vipallasa. (the same for sañña vipallasa. Ditthi vipallasa is with wrong view).

Robert: spoke about meditation centers where people believe that they see all their defilements.

Sukin: There should not just be hearing the words of the teachings but also understanding at that very moment.

Jon: One should not try and see the unwholesome mental states.

Metta: Most important is the right consideration. Reality arises and falls away, by conditions. There is no self, only realities that arise and fall away by conditions.

Sarah: We cannot emphasize that enough.

Hoi An group: While considering is the citta kusala or akusala?

Cuan: which cetasika is considering?

Sarah: What is the main cetasika while considering?

Cuan: Sometimes wondering, sometimes understanding. I am not sure it is kusala or akusala.

Sarah: The main mental factor(while considering) is vitakka, thinking. It depends what object it touches at that moment. Even now, while reflecting on Dhamma it can be kusala or akusala. It is conditioned by memory (sañña). If one had not heard about the different words and ideas there could not be considering about them. All these kinds of thinking, wise or unwise, are accumulated. Reflecting now conditions more in this way in the future.

Ann: There is manasikara that is yoniso manasikara, wise attention.

Jon: Manasikara arises with every citta.

Sarah: They all arise together.

Nina.

2.17 meeting on line V, 1

nina

May 10 #162956

Dear friends,

I appreciate it that Acharn asks us questions to make us consider reality. She asked Simin: Where are you now? She answered: In Holland. When we think of a place we are not considering reality. We think: I am here, I, I, I. The realities are seeing, hearing or thinking, no person. This is an excellent reminder. So often we think : *We* are here. In reality there are consciousness, citta, mental factor, cetasika, and physical phenomena, rupa. These are really true, but we forget. All the other thoughts are conventional realities.

Acharn: What is meant by the development of understanding? When a reality appears nothing else can appear together with it. Developing understanding by conditions is a long way. No one can do anything,

this is most difficult. Each word of the Buddha, in the Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma points to this moment.

Question: is considering (the truth) directing citta towards the object?

Sarah: As soon as the idea of directing arises there is an idea of “I can do”. That is not understanding naturally what appears.

Nguyen (ten years old): Acharn says: Can anyone stop seeing? When I Close my eyes there is no seeing. I can control it.

Acharn: When there is no intention can the eye be closed by itself? The intention is not self. Can one open or close the eyes without intention? Is intention you? Intention (or volition, *cetana*) arises with each moment of citta. It can be wholesome (*kusala*), unwholesome (*akusala*), result (*vipaka*) or inoperative (*kiriya*).

Sarah: Can you decide what to hear? If there are no conditions there is no hearing. Can you decide now to be angry or happy? They just depend on different conditions.

Nina.

2.18 Meeting on line V, 2

nina

May 11 #162974

Dear friends,

Alan: What is the importance of knowing the difference between nama(mental phenomena) and rupa (physical phenomena)? We can have some understanding of *cetasikas* (mental factors), such as anger, happiness and sadness. But it is very difficult to understand citta. What is the importance of understanding citta as opposed to rupa?

Acharn: Can you understand indifferent feeling?

Alan: No.

Acharn: Citta is the chief of experiencing. The object that is experienced can appear in daily life. There is wrong understanding all the time, it takes the object for “something”. When anger arises it appears

as something, it is “me”. What is doubt? It is still “me”. By conditions. People pay attention to the object that is experienced and the experience itself is hidden. There is doubt and ignorance about the five khandhas.

Alan: We are occupied with the object, we do not know the nature of the reality which thinks.

Sarah: trying to understand, to catch sañña (remembrance) and other realities is not understanding. When there is wanting it is a trap.

If there is no understanding of the distinction between seeing and what is seen, there is definitely the idea of “I see, I hear” and of “something” that is seen. Begin to understand those realities as not self, not “I see”. If we think that it is easier to understand cetasika than to understand citta, it is just thinking, not understanding what appears now.

Acharn: I am here in my room.

Sarah (laughter): We think we are in our room, just thinking. I am somewhere, in the world of concepts.

Alan: If there is no thinking, there is no room, I can understand this intellectually. When there is awareness of hardness, there is just hardness, not a room. When there is thinking that I am somewhere, there is no understanding of reality, there is the world of concepts.

Acharn: When there is just that which experiences, there is no room, no where. Otherwise there is always the idea of “I am sitting here.” The experience does not appear well. When it appears well, it appears just to the level of pañña (that has been attained) there is nothing else with that reality (there is only that reality).

Alan: Just one reality, no place, no person. When it arises it can only arise by conditions.

Acharn: There is just the right condition for that reality at that moment.

Alan: In spite of the fact that attachment arises each split second, understanding works its way while we listen. So, there are conditions.

Acharn: When the asavas (intoxicants, very subtle defilements) arise it is so clear that nothing can be done. Seeing arises, then receiving-consciousness, investigating-consciousness, determining-consciousness, and then the intoxicants arise already. There is attachment to sense-objects, wrong view, clinging to existence or ignorance. Ignorance is already

there. We should not underestimate the Buddha's words. The development of understanding takes time, because it is so very deep and subtle. To understand this moment: there is the reality that experiences, and what appears is the object of the reality that experiences; it is gone very rapidly. It is beyond expectation how fast it is. When our eyes are closed, nothing can appear as house or window anymore. What impinges on the eyesense appears very shortly and then the intoxicants follow instantly. It takes a long time to let go of the idea of self who can do something. What appears is only what can impinge on the eyesense, and it is already gone. It can be the object of right understanding, that is what is meant by *ariya sacca dhamma* (dhamma of the noble Truth). The noble Truth can be experienced by highly developed *pañña*. Begin from now on. *Pañña* develops every moment of hearing and understanding.

Nina.

2.19 Meeting on line, V,3

nina

May 12 #162990

Dear friends,

Alan: What eradicates attachment? Nobody can control the arising of attachment.

Acharn: There can be the understanding that no one can make it arise. When there is more understanding there will be more confidence. There is only *citta* that experiences, it is the chief of experiencing. Different *cittas* arise all the time. There are ignorance and clinging, taking it (the object that is experienced) for "something", from life to life, even now. The words of the Buddha are that no one makes it (reality) arise. Seeing sees, that's all, thinking, thinking, that's all. No one knows the arising and falling away, until hearing the teachings of the Buddha. Thinking is not seeing. Wanting is not detachment. There are conditions for the arising of each reality.

Just a moment of seeing is conditioned by what impinges on the eye-sense and by the object that impinges on it. There are citta (consciousness), cetasika (mental factors arising with citta) and rupa (physical phenomena). We understand each moment as very temporary, appearing and disappearing. No one knew about this, until the Buddha enlightened the truth. Each word can condition understanding that could not arise by itself. There can be right considering to understand that this is so true.

Right understanding is very weak in the beginning. One can see how slowly it develops. The understanding from hearing and considering just begins very, very little.

Carmen: tells about her conversations with others about effort. The Buddha says that we have to make an effort, but that is also conditioned.

Acharn: How can I? What is there instead of thinking, “how can I”? Without the reality which thinks can there be the idea of “I think”? Thinking is not seeing, it can experience different objects. There are two kinds of realities: one reality that cannot experience anything, such as sound, smell, heat or cold, and one reality that experiences. Seeing is conditioned; it cannot arise without eyesense; and also kamma (past action) is a condition. Actually what appears is not under anyone’s control. Where is “I”? The arising and falling away is not realized and, thus, this brings about the idea of something permanent.

Sarah: What is conditioned is not self. There are just different dhammas at this moment.

Carmen: Buddha is teaching to get us out of samsara (the cycle of birth and death). Others told me that I can exert effort. They called me fatalistic.

Sarah: As to the idea of getting myself out of samsara, it is “me”. It is not the understanding of realities. Even doubt is conditioned, it falls away instantly.

Sundara: The conditionality of dhammas is very different from fatalism. These two matters are easily confused. When there is a strong idea of “I”, it is easy to misunderstand the Dhamma.

Jon: wants to ask Carmen how she understands fatalism.

Carmen: As to getting out of samsara, one cannot make it happen more quickly. As to fatalism, one does not have any influence (how things happen).

Jon: they were accusing you of being fatalistic, because you said that you cannot make things happen more quickly by directed effort. Effort is conditioned. It is for the purpose of more wholesomeness and more understanding.

Alan: By the understanding of conditions we are going into the right direction. We are mostly making an effort with the idea of self. We are progressing by understanding more about conditionality. When there is fatalism there will be no progress.

Sukin: The understanding of the present moment is the understanding that this is the Path.

Alan: It is moving out of samsara.

Nina.

2.20 Meeting on line, VI, 1

nina

May 17 #163049

Dear friends,

Thinking about concepts and wrong view:

Nina: Acharn asked Carmen: where are you now and she answered : in Holland. Acharn then explained: when there is awareness of nama (mental phenomena) and rupa (physical phenomena) there is no place. There are only the reality that experiences and the reality that does not experience. Jon reminded me that this does not mean that there is always wrong view when thinking of concepts. We can cling to self without wrong view. The sotapanna (who has attained the first stage of enlightenment) has no wrong view but he can still cling to an idea of self. There are three ways of clinging to a self: one without wrong view, one with wrong view and clinging with conceit. We all have clinging to self without wrong view, but it is not so easy to understand that. We have an idea of "it is me". Only pañña can know this. It is a good reminder that when we are living in the world of concepts there is not always wrong view. I am very grateful for all reminders.

Acharn: Can there be the understanding of wrong view as just a reality? Otherwise we only think about it. So long as wrong view is not the object of right understanding when it appears, there is only thinking about it. When there is wrong view, right understanding understand it as just a reality. If it does not arise how can there be the understanding as not you, as a reality?

Understand what is now. It cannot appear to ignorance and attachment. It can appear to right understanding that begins to understand what appears by conditions.

Sarah: In another group we were discussing the difference between *pariyatti* (intellectual understanding) and *patipatti* (direct understanding). We discussed thinking of the “story” of realities. For example we know that sound is experienced by hearing, that it is *rupa*, not self. The story is not the same as direct understanding when it appears now.

Sound can be experienced as just a *dhamma*, not the sound of a voice, of rain, of traffic. There is sound at this moment. It is the same with wrong view. There can be a long story about it, such as, that it does not arise when there is conceit. This is different from direct understanding of it, the direct understanding of the characteristic of wrong view when it appears. When a reality appears it can be known directly. Otherwise we are always repeating the story about it.

We should always come back to now, to what appears now.

Nina.

2.21 Meeting on line, VI, 2

nina

May 18 #163062

Dear friends,

Mai Son: I have a question about the third Noble Truth, *nibbana*, on the level of *sacca ñana*, correct intellectual understanding. *Sacca ñana* is not the “story” about reality.

Acharn: What is ñana (understanding)? Each word should be understood clearly. What is sacca ñana?

Mai Son: sacca is truth and ñana is the understanding of the truth. It is understanding reality right now. Understanding what appears now. Nibbana is not yet understood.

Acharn: Is there thinking or understanding?

Mai Son: Thinking is considering.

Acharn: What is sacca? Sacca is the truth. Is there any truth now, to be known from the very beginning? When it is very firm it can be sacca ñana; it never changes. The ñana which understands sacca, the truth, clearer and clearer.

(N: it is the first of the three phases: sacca ñana, kicca ñana, which is direct understanding developed through satipatthana and kata ñana, the clear realisation of the truth.)

What is the truth, sacca, to be known? Not me, but pañña understands it as it is. Sacca is truth, the truth of what? Is there any truth now? Sacca ñana of the first noble Truth, dukkha ariya sacca.

Mai Son: It is not yet known now.

Acharn: So it is not sacca ñana. Before knowing the third noble Truth, there should be understanding of the others one by one. What is the first noble Truth?

Mai Son: Dukkha now, the reality that arises and disappears now.

Acharn: Is there any understanding of the truth of that which appears? What is the truth? Otherwise there is not even understanding of the first Truth. If there is no understanding of the first Truth, how can there be understanding of the second, the third and the fourth Truth?

What is the first noble Truth?

Mai Son: Dukkha now.

Acharn: Understanding is not just hearing and remembering. It is useless without understanding what is now appearing.

This moment is the first Truth. The second Truth is more difficult to understand. It is not just understanding the word, but understanding the truth of it.

Understanding is understanding, not just hearing and thinking. It is understanding reality now.

Is dukkha ariya sacca (the noble Truth of dukkha) real? What moment does not have dukkha?

Mai Son: We do not know dukkha, we think it is me, it is permanent. The characteristic of dukkha does not appear now.

Acharn: Sacca is the truth. Is there anything real or true? Ariya sacca (the noble truth) is realised by the highly developed pañña. This is the pañña that directly experiences the truth of whatever appears.

Why do we listen? What for? What is the purpose? We have to consider carefully the truth of each of the Buddha's words. What is dukkha now?

Mai Son: The arising and disappearing of realities. Nothing lasts, there is no self.

Acharn: Why is it dukkha?

Mai Son: It is not under anyone's control. It arises by conditions, and it is beyond our power.

Acharn: What is not dukkha in this life?

Mai Son: Seeing is dukkha, everything is dukkha.

Acharn: Is what is pleasurable dukkha?

Mai Son: It arises and disappears.

Acharn: Why is Nibbana not dukkha? Is Nibbana understanding?

Mai Son: Nibbana can be understood by pañña of the level of the ariyans (enlightened ones), not right now.

Acharn: What is the difference between Nibbana and anything else? Nibbana is not understanding, not seeing or thinking.

Mai Son: Nibbana is unconditioned, it is not sankhara dhamma (conditioned dhamma).

Acharn: Can it be dukkha?

Mai Son: No, it cannot.

Acharn: Why not?

Mai Son: It is not dependent on conditions.

Acharn: Does Nibbana arise?

Mai Son: No.

Acharn: What arises and falls away is dukkha. Is there Nibbana now, in this life?

Mai Son: No, not yet.

Acharn: Whatever in this life appears, is it dukkha? Everything that arises and falls away, is it dukkha? So life is dukkha. Is right understanding dukkha? Does pañña arise?

Mai Son: Yes.

Acharn: Is it dukkha? What is not dukkha? That should be directly understood, not just by thinking. Is it different from now? This is the *sacca ñana* of the four noble Truths. It should be clear understanding of whatever is now. It is not talking about words.

Right understanding has to begin, it has to become stronger and stronger, firmer and firmer until there is no doubt. That is the meaning of *sacca ñana* of the four noble Truths, on the level of *pariyatti* (intellectual understanding).

Sarah: The understanding of *sacca ñana* on the level of *pariyatti* is very firm understanding of the noble Truths. It is not the direct understanding, but firm intellectual understanding of what dukkha is now, for example.

Nina.

2.22 Meeting on line VI, 3

nina

May 19 #163068

Dear friends,

Betty: Can Acharn explain about the second noble Truth?

(N: The cause of dukkha which is attachment)

Acharn: Is there attachment to everything? Is it known now?

Betty: No.

Acharn: We have to understand the characteristic of the first Truth before seeing the cause which is there to condition life. At this moment there is just intellectual understanding of attachment which is there almost all the time. The *asavas* (intoxicants) arise: clinging to sense objects, to existence, to views and ignorance. Three moments after seeing (or after the other sense-cognitions), there are intoxicants: attachment and the idea of "I". We need the Buddha's teachings to understand this. It is not easy, it goes on so fast, one reality to another reality. There must be the understanding of reality, of dhamma. Later on, after a long time (of development) they can appear to *sati* and *pañña*.

At the first vipassana ñāna the arising and falling away of realities is not yet realized. There is the understanding of the truth that there is no one there: only what experiences and what is experienced. No place is experienced. That is the meaning of reality: no one can make it arise, no one can change its characteristic or the way it has arisen and fallen away. There is no doubt, each characteristic appears as it is.

The second Truth does not appear yet. Pañña can know the difference between very strong and very weak lobha. Not by thinking, but by right mindfulness and pañña of the level of satipatthana.

Now we are just talking about realities and there is ignorance of what is arising and falling away. Attachment to what appears cannot be easily known, until pañña develops. The object which is anatta cannot be selected, nor can the time of understanding. Understanding develops from intellectual understanding to satipatthana. But a few moments that arise in the beginning are not enough, even one life is not enough (to develop pañña). No one can condition higher understanding. The knowledge of the arising and falling away of realities can let go of attachment to a following reality. When there is no attachment to the next reality then whatever appears becomes clearer.

Sundara: Can Acharn talk about the third noble Truth?

Acharn: If there is no understanding of dukkha how can there be the end of clinging? There is thinking about the arising and falling away of realities. If there is no direct experience of the arising and falling away one does not see the danger of this. There is so much to learn before there is understanding that there is no “me”.

As to seeing the danger, there is no desire or attachment to see again, to be born again. Would you like to see something or experience something? Before there can be understanding of nibbana, there must be understanding of what arises and falls away. There should be understanding of the conditions for the arising of nama and rupa. Nothing arises without conditions. There will be more understanding by keeping on listening to the Dhamma.

Sundara expresses his appreciation and he will listen again to Acharn’s explanations. He said: looking at Dhamma from different angles is always helpful.

Nina.

2.23 Meeting on line, VI, 4

nina

May 20 #163080

Dear friends,

Mai Son: I like to understand the true meaning of following the rules in the Vinaya for the monk.

Acharn: What is Vinaya?

Mai Son: There are many aspects of considering the Vinaya. Some people understand Vinaya as rules of conduct, some people understand it as (learning about) akusala qualities.

Acharn: What is the benefit of understanding Vinaya?

Mai Son: It helps us to understand what is kusala and what akusala, and to understand the quality of citta.

Sarah: The purpose of Vinaya is not just to follow rules. One could do that with ignorance and without understanding of the teachings. The purpose is the relinquishment of akusala in order to develop the Path, leading the life of the arahat; not without the development of satipatthana.

Sundara: Vinaya is derived from vineti, meaning leading out. The Vinaya leads away from akusala, out of samsara, the cycle of birth and death. There are different levels of akusala, some of which are very subtle.

Sarah: It has to do with this moment, understanding of akusala now. If this is not the case there is no training (sikkha).

Alberto: speaks about breaking the rules intentionally and the subtlety of the study of realities.

Sundara: We read that the monk is not to stand with arms akimbo, this is unbecoming. This reminds him of dosa (aversion) he may be having.

Nina: There are many exceptions to the rules such as in the case of sickness or being mentally disturbed. This shows the Buddha's great compassion. He thought of all those situations with the wish to help people.

Trin: Alan Driver was a monk before but he disrobed later on. He was telling Nina, while in India, that he wanted to live like Upali. He wanted to keep the Vinaya perfectly but could not find any place with perfect Vinaya. He understood so well that the Vinaya has to go together with satipatthana, the understanding of realities right now.

Sarah: In the beginning Alan thought that living as a monk was a favorable condition for having more time to be spend with study and reading. Then he realized that this was not the right way. It does no matter how busy one is in daily life, occupied with worldly chores, taking care of family. Seeing is seeing, hearing is hearing and there can be understanding and awareness at any moment. Understanding matters, not the amount of time for book study, including the study of Pali.

There can be understanding of this very moment.

Tam: For the monk there is the disciplinary code, the restraint of Patimokkha, and restraint of the senses (indriya samvara sila). Sati and pañña are needed for sila, understanding should not be lacking.

Sarah: It is wrong understanding to think that there should be sila first so that later on there will be understanding. Understanding should be there from the beginning. The restraint of Patimokkha has to be with understanding.

Now, while we look at our friends, there can be attachment or understanding. Anything we read in the “Visuddhimagga” , in whatever section, is about satipatthana.

Mai Son read in Visuddhimagga, Ch 14, § 16-18 about three ways of classifying understanding. Three ways of skillfulness. He wanted to know whether this is related to the Vinaya (N: In this whole section understanding is classified in many different ways.) Mai Son said: I should do or should not do seems related to “I”.

Sarah: We can talk about skillful in a conventional sense. The Visuddhimagga talks about satipatthana and the direct understanding of realities.

Metta: in the Vinaya the monk may try to follow the rules, but there may not be understanding. But the Vinaya is Dhamma, leading out of defilements.

Sarah: If it is not leading out of defilements and out of the cycle it is useless. If it is not leading away from the idea of self and there is the idea of “I can do, I can follow”, it is useless. The observance

of Patimokkha without understanding dhamma as anatta cannot lead away from defilements and there is accumulation of more and more defilements.

Sarah: refers to the four kinds of sati-sampajañña (mentioned in the commentary to the satipatthana sutta): what is suitable, what is the purpose, what is the object of understanding and non-delusion as to the object. Listening to the Dhamma is very suitable, but if we set a rule that we must listen that is not the understanding of suitability. There has to be the understanding of reality.

As to the object, each object can be the object of satipatthana, such as visible object or sound now. As to the purpose, it is not following particular rules.

Trin: when one is counting rules, when the monk thinks that he can keep so many rules, there is an idea of self.

Sarah: there is clinging, not following with understanding.

Ann: spoke about confession by a monk when there is the breach of a rule. It can be with understanding.

Jonothan: when there is the breach of a rule and no confession, it can lead to bad results, regardless of a level of understanding.

Sarah: Alan Driver disrobed. As a monk he kept the rules very well, and as a layperson life was very difficult for him. Acharn's comment was that this was more natural, better than forcing oneself. Understanding can develop naturally, it has to know those accumulations. If they are not known as they are, understanding is blocked.

Trin: When a fault is committed and one understands it as it is there is truthfulness.

Sarah: there is the perfection of truthfulness (sacca parami).

Tam was reading the passage of the Visuddhimagga about the three different kinds of pañña Mai Son mentioned. There is a reference to the four right efforts. (N: unarisen akusala dhammas do not arise and arisen akusala dhammas are abandoned; unarisen kusala dhammas arise and arisen kusala dhammas advance in growth.)

Sarah: the four right efforts develop along with right understanding.

Nina.

2.24 Meeting on line, VII, 1

nina

May 26 #163171

Dear friends,

Nina: Last time there were many helpful points and good reminders. Someone wanted to become a monk so that he would have more free time for study and reading. This is the wrong purpose of monkhood. Also some laypeople think that they want to be away from daily life, from all the daily chores and from taking care of family members. They go on long retreats in order to have more free time for awareness. This is the wrong way, it is clinging to an idea of self who wants to have more awareness. The development of understanding has to be very natural, in daily life.

The conversation between Mai Son and Acharn was also full of reminders to understand the present moment. Acharn asked Mai Son what the first noble Truth is. He did not say: dukkha, but he said: dukkha now. He understood very well that the present reality has to be understood. Acharn emphasized that memorizing and thinking is useless without understanding this very moment. We heard this before, but when you hear it many times it becomes more meaningful.

It is the same when hearing repeatedly about the intoxicants (asavas), the very subtle defilements that arise almost immediately after seeing, hearing and the other sense-cognitions. They are unknown, and we have to hear this many times before it makes more sense.

Acharn explained about the understanding of the arising and falling away of realities, which can be realised at a higher stage of insight. There is letting go if one does not cling to the next reality. But attachment hinders the “letting go”. I am wondering what the next reality is one clings to, is it in the same process?

Sarah: Acharn explained that only when there is direct understanding of the arising and falling away of realities, understanding sees how useless it is to cling to the next reality that has not come yet and is then already gone. We can talk about the danger of seeing and hearing, but it is thinking, even when there is the understanding of seeing or

hearing. There is not yet the direct understanding of their arising and falling away.

Acharn: There is clinging all the time and without understanding it, it hinders and covers up the truth of the falling away of the previous reality. Then it is impossible to let go of clinging. All the teachings of the Buddha are about letting go little by little, of hearing, of the idea of self that is unknown. As soon as seeing has fallen away, after three moments of consciousness, the intoxicant, *asava*, is there, unknown. At this moment, seeing, hearing, everything arises and falls away, but it is unknown. It does not appear well.

The beginning is the understanding of one characteristic. There is hardness, but there is no clear understanding of it, it does not appear to *sati*. It arises and falls away, and it is covered up by other realities. Seeing and hearing keep on falling away, how can anything appear well? Seeing is only seeing, now, it experiences visible object. Its arising and falling away do not appear yet. *Pariyatti* is not firm enough to condition a few moments with direct understanding. Direct understanding is different from *pariyatti*.

Pañña begins to understand the characteristic of *sati* as not self. There is no wishing or expecting for the arising of anything. Understanding develops, to understand the moment of conditioned reality. This is the only way.

Even now, we talk about realities but they do not appear well, because it is not direct *sati*, only *sati* at the level of intellectual understanding. All the way understanding will lead to more detachment, detachment from taking anything for self. Attachment is a hindrance to knowing the reality which follows. Realities do not appear well so that there could be letting go of the idea of self. Just like now, *pañña* knows of what level it is. Or there may be doubt or attachment. We live in darkness, but *sati* conditions a moment of reality appearing well, little by little. *Pañña* is not clear yet, it is very slight and develops on and on.

There will be more understanding of *sati* at the level of *pariyatti* and of *sati* at the level of *patipatti*. It depends on the conditions for its arising, when time comes. This is the way to eradicate the wish and craving for *sati*. The development has to be in daily life. Now all conditioned realities are arising and falling away, beyond any expectation.

Jon: Anything that is real at the present moment arises and falls away by conditions, but it is not known to us. There is no way of knowing what reality is going to arise.

Sarah: The more understanding develops the less clinging is there to what is coming, to the next moment. This is because of understanding it naturally, not because of any wish to have less clinging. What is the point of clinging to what is unknown and has not come yet.

Nina

2.25 Meeting on line VII, 2

nina

May 27 #163205

Dear friends,

Azita: doubts about the arising and falling away of realities and finds it too difficult to understand, why bother?

Acharn: Is there doubt now? Even now there may be doubt about (the difference between) seeing and that which is seen. There are so many realities but not even one appears as it is, right now. Because there is not patipatti (direct understanding) yet.

Jon: You may have no doubt but a lack of confidence.

Sarah: When doubt arises it is just another dhamma, not my doubt. There can be understanding of its characteristic at that moment.

Mai: had a question about the Yuganaddha Sutta (In Tandem, AN IV. 170.) Some people develop jhana first and then insight, some insight first and then jhana, some develop jhana and insight yoked together and some develop insight alone.

Sarah explained that this is a description of people with different accumulations, these are not different paths. She said: "People are different but, whatever their accumulations, there can be understanding of what appears now."

Acharn: Each word of the Buddha pertains to the anattanness of all dhammas, and this is the answer (to all questions).

Sarah: When people read suttas they think of a set of instructions rather than understanding that there is a description of dhammas that are anatta and depending on different accumulations.

Acharn: What about you? Is there samatha now, is it conditioned? Can it arise any time at will? Can anyone have it, by sitting, doing something, thinking that it is samatha?

Sarah: We are talking about calmness, a cetasika (mental factor). If there is no understanding it is impossible to develop it. It is a matter of understanding of what life is now. It is not a matter of choosing: I will take this path or that path. There is one Path: understanding life at this moment. If one wants to have a quick result there is no calm.

Maeve was wondering what the distinction is between the development of pañña and the accumulation of pañña.

Acharn: kusala and akusala are accumulated. Understanding arises and is then gone, but it is accumulated. Citta has the function of accumulating kusala and akusala. No one is doing anything. There are always attachment and ignorance as conditions for the arising of akusala, but there are not always conditions for pañña. Pañña will lead to more wholesome moments, such as the perfections (paramis).

Maeve asked whether the study of Pali is helpful for the development of understanding.

Sarah: The teachings are not in the book, the language, the Pali terms. It is all for the sake of understanding this moment, it is not a matter of collecting words.

Nina.

2.26 Meeting on Line, VII, 111

nina

May 28 #163219

Dear friends,

Alan: before the Buddha's teaching was known samatha was developed. But after hearing his teaching, what is the point of developing samatha? Is it a matter of accumulation?

Sarah: Calm is a cetasika arising with each kusala citta. Calm develops with insight, it develops with understanding naturally. Then there is no interest in developing another type of calm, such as jhana. The Path is just about developing understanding of this moment.

Jon: The distinction between kusala and akusala is usually not known, such as true metta and attachment. When Samatha is developed that distinction becomes clearer.

Sarah: When one focuses on breath, there is no understanding at all. There is an idea of "I can focus". There is no development of calm, no kusala at all.

Alan: As to letting go, it is a conditioned moment, nobody can let go.

Sarah: When understanding is developed there will gradually be less the idea of "I can do." The highly developed insight that understands directly the arising and falling away of realities is really letting go. There is letting go of what arose before and of what has not arisen yet. It is useless to cling to what has gone like seeing now.

Alan: the first noble Truth (understanding dukkha) leads to the second noble Truth(the cause of dukkha, clinging).

Sarah: If there is no understanding of how unsatisfactory realities are, there cannot be understanding of the cause: continuous clinging to what is unsatisfactory.

Alan: How do the rules (for the monk) help to understand reality now?

Nina: The rules deal with all the subtle kinds of akusala that occur. When we hear about this we can also think of the defilements in our own daily life. Defilements are not self, they arise because of accumulations. The more we understand that they are not self, the more pañña can grow. No self is what the Buddha stressed all the time. Whatever happens is all by conditions.

Sarah: It is not the rules that lead to understanding. We hear about the precepts like abstaining from stealing. If we just follow the rules we may do this because we are afraid to get into trouble. It is understanding which sees the harm of akusala. Seeing the difficulty of

life bound up with akusala may lead to living the monk's life naturally. Understanding can lead to following the monk's life.

Trin: Why did the Buddha teach about the four accumulations (Yuganaddha sutta, about developing first jhana and then insight, etc.)? The Buddha shows that there are different accumulations to be understood. It is understanding all the way. Just as Assaji taught Sariputta: whatever dhamma arises, it does so by conditions.

Sarah: There is only one Path, no matter what the accumulations are.

Mai: had a question about tranquillity as a vehicle.

Trin: Even tranquillity can be understood as not self.

Sarah: We read in the suttas about making an effort, or great determination. This is just an explanation of different dhammas which are anatta. The more there is understanding of dhammas like seeing now, hearing, kusala or akusala now, the more confidence there is that all are anatta. No matter what one reads, no one can make anything happen. No one can make an effort, or have calm arise.

Jon: When one reads about the description of right effort, one gets a wrong idea. Effort is just a cetasika.

Trin: In the beginning of the Satipatthana sutta it is said that understanding of realities that arise is the only way. Even calm can be the object of understanding. There is no choosing.

Sarah: He teaches about the one Way, the one Path, no matter what accumulations there are.

Sundara: Acharn said about the intoxicants (asavas), that they arise so quickly, are so subtle, working all the time. It is very fortunate that she can help us to understand this.

Nina: By ourselves we would never know about the intoxicants, which are so subtle and arise so quickly. It is very helpful to hear about that again and again, because we forget.

Alan and Sundara discussed about the order of the first three suttas the Buddha uttered after his enlightenment. "Setting in motion the Wheel of Dhamma", about the four noble Truths was the first sutta. The Buddha said that the truth he attained was deep, subtle, hard to understand. He would preach to people with little dust in their eyes. The second sutta was the "Anatta lakkhana Sutta" and the third one

was the “Fire Sutta” (Adittha sutta, S N IV, 19. The All is on fire with the blaze of lust, of ill-will and of ignorance).

As to the “Anatta Lakkhana Sutta”, Sarah remarked: each reality arises and falls away by conditions. No one can choose anything. Even when it is not directly said, it is implied in this sutta.

Nina.

2.27 Meeting on line IX, 1

nina

Jun 7 #163381

Dear friends,

There was a debate about killing, such as in the case of a dog given anti-worm medicine. One may know the outcome of this act, but there may not be the intention to kill. Two different things were discerned: the intention and the likely outcome. Sundara spoke about the removal of a life support that keeps a person alive.

Sarah: Did the daughter who removed this want to make the mother feel comfortable? What is the intention, to kill? It is much more subtle.

Sundara: had his doubts when it is the case of a human being.

Jon: Each act of kamma patha involves intention.

There was a discussion about euthanasia, following a parent’s wish.

Jon said the child does not want to cause the parent’s death.

Sarah: Acharn said it just depends on the person’s intention at that moment.

Sundara: Even a person asks tat his life is to be taken, it does not mean you have to.

Jon: We just talk about the dhammas involved, not what you are going to do, there is a lot of emotion involved. The question is what are the requirements involved to be kamma patha. What is the intention, and this is not the same as knowing the likely consequence.

Sarah: it is not always apparent from the outside what the intention is.

Azita: It is not sure the person will die when the tube is removed. Is it one's intention to kill or to remove the tube.

Ann: wanted to know more about *pariñña*, and the following stage of *vipassana ñana* (insight knowledge, which develops in stages).

Sarah: It is the direct applying of insight in daily life. It is a different level of understanding based on that insight, from that direct experience. Acharn used a simile: if you never have been to Japan you can just talk about it and this is different from actually having been there.

There are different stages of insight. It depends on accumulation whether there is a long time between different stages of insight, a lot of applying, or very little applying. No rule at all.

Jon: after attaining a particular level of *ñana*, there may be many moments of awareness and insight of different degrees. Some weak, some stronger. They carry one further towards the next stage. Others don't, they just accumulate; they are just moments of awareness and insight, not making (further) progress.

Sarah: just understanding and reflection based on that (is *pariñña*).

Nina.

2.28 Meeting on line IX, 2

nina

Jun 11 #163434

Dear friends,

Alan: about being a vegetarian. It seems my thinking, what I want, what it seems to me. One thinks: when one is a Buddhist one should be a vegetarian. Thinking is taken for self.

Sarah: It comes back to intention at this moment. Thinking about being a vegetarian is like thinking of a situation. One believes that less cattle will be killed. It is a long story and a lot of clinging to self-righteousness. To know what is real comes back to *citta* now, to

intention at this moment. I take up a chicken at the supermarket and I have to intention to kill or harm.

Alan: Thinking can be understood as an uncontrollable reality that arises and falls away. “I am making a decision”, even that is wrong thinking

A General orders a battle and the result may be many deaths. Killing may not be his intention at that moment.

Sarah: Acharn gave the example of dropping a bomb. One does not know what the consequences may be. One may just be following an order and have no intention to kill. When we think in terms of a situations, there can never be understanding of realities or understanding what the intention is at any moment.

Sundara: refers to the Amagandha Sutta (Sutta Nipata II, 2, Car-rion), where it is said that fish and meat are not carrion (foul) but defilements are carrion. We read that the Buddha (and a former Bud-dha) at fish and meat. Sundara mentioned that Acharn had said that eating is not killing.

Alan: The second factor of the eightfol Path is sometimes translated as right intention. Is it right intention or right thinking? Thinking does not have to be thinking in words.

Sarah: Even thinking can be misleading.

Alan: Intention may suggest that you can have mindfulness by in-tention. Then one is going into the wrong direction.

Sundara: Words can be misleading. Most important is the under-standing of the Dhamma. When there is understanding of the reality of the present moment, it does not matter what words are used.

Sarah: Acharn mentions Right Thinking (*samma sankappa*, *vitakka cetasika*) as the *cetasika* that is touching the object (N: It touches the object so that right understanding can understand it). But then people think of physical touch.

Alan: mind-door is one of the six doorways , it is not just thinking.

Sarah: Mind-door is the last *bhavanga-citta* before the mind-door adverting-consciousness arises and the object is experienced through the mind-door. Without it the mind-door adverting-consciousness cannot experience the object through that doorway. It is a *kiriya-citta* arising at the heartbase, not at a sense-base. It experiences both realities and concepts.

Jon: When someone translates *samma-sankappa* as right intention, he is not thinking of *cetana* (volition). (N: It is difficult to find a suitable translation. Ven. Bodhi found this an option.)

Q: Why can *cetana* not be a Path factor?

Sarah: *Cetana*, volition, arises with each *citta* and the development of the Path does not depend on it. It is not one of the factors leading to enlightenment.

Right concentration is a Path factor. It is the proximate cause of *pañña*, it develops together with *pañña*. *Cetana* is not a proximate cause of *pañña*.

Sundara: We are fortunate to be able to listen to Acharn. Ven. Bodhi is a brilliant translator and he has a good knowledge of Pali. But Acharn reminded him that a reality is appearing.

Many do not understand the difference between concept and reality, which is very fundamental. Otherwise understanding is very hazy.

Maeve: tries to find the connection between every day experience and understanding Dhamma.

Sarah: Back to life now, at this moment. The *cetasika vitakka* arises with almost every *citta*. It touches the object so that *citta* and the other *cetasikas* can experience it. It depends on *vitakka* which object is experienced.

Sundara on dictionaries: they can be misleading and only help on the conventional level.

Nina.

2.29 Meeting on line IX, 3

nina

Jun 12 #163452

Dear friends,

Dialogue with Chin, Roxanne's husband.

Sarah: What is life at this moment?

Chin: Life is energy.

Sarah: Is there seeing now? At each moment there is a different consciousness. Seeing, hearing, thinking, each moment arises by different conditions. At the moment of seeing or hearing now, who or what sees or hears?

Chin: It is me.

Sarah: What is that Chin that sees?

Chin: Seeing is communication. There is communication.

Sarah: If we know already: “I see Roxanne”, why do we need the Buddha’s teaching to know this? What is special about the Buddha’s teaching?

Chin: It is leading to the end of suffering.

Sarah: We need more understanding of life at this moment. Is there first seeing of what is visible and then thinking of the idea of Roxanne? Hearing of what is heard and then thinking of the meaning? Thinking of different words and ideas? Only sound is heard, only visible object is seen. There is thinking “I see Roxanne”. The visible object that is seen is seen for a moment, and then it is gone. It is not satisfactory, not worth clinging to. It is just visible object.

Chin: What can we do to come to the right conditions for understanding more quickly? Will and intention?

Jon: The explanation of the way things are in reality has to be heard in order to have understanding. You heard explanations by Sundara and Sarah. Sarah was helping you to understand what I seen, what is heard at the present moment. When you think about what is heard there is conceptualization. The truth is so deep and subtle, it cannot be comprehended at a single hearing. It depends on conditions. We use the expression “conditioned reality” to explain this. We can know what are the necessary factors for understanding to develop, such as contact with others who also have an interest, and sharing our knowledge.

Chin: How to attain enlightenment more quickly?

Jon: We cannot decide what we are going to hear. Even we can say in general that the Buddha’s explanation of things can be a condition. We cannot determine when enlightenment is going to happen. It is no point to think that more discussion means faster development of understanding. There is no rule.

Sarah: The Buddha’s teaching is about the understanding of different realities now, such as seeing, hearing, attachment. Each one is not

self. It is not:”I am seeing, hearing or thinking.” It is not Roxanne who is seen. There are just different moments (of reality). This is the way to understand what suffering, unsatisfactoriness, is. Each of the realities, like seeing now, is not in anyone’s control. No one can choose what will be seen or heard, like now. That is why it is unsatisfactory. It cannot be the way we want. No one can have pleasant experiences all the time. No one can choose to see what he wants. Seeing arises by conditions and falls away instantly. Hearing arises by conditions and falls away instantly. None of these belong to Chin, Roxanne or Sarah.

Sundara: You think: “I see Roxanne”, anybody can understand that. Sarah tried to help you to understand the difference between concept and reality, or the distinction about what is seen and our idea about what is seen. “I see somebody” is thinking of a story. Concept and reality are different.

Jon: Understanding is not a matter of choice. What you are going to see or hear is that a matter of choice? Things happen by conditions, not by choice. We do not really understand conditions that make things happen. We have no control or choice. We cannot choose whether we get sick or not. We do the best to stay healthy. You could choose to join the discussion today but not be able to get a connection (on internet). There is no guarantee that what we will do will bring result.

Chin: Why put a mask on (as protection against Corona).

Jon: We do not say: don’t do anything. We do the best we can, but the outcome is always uncertain.

Sarah: It seems that I can control or decide, such as putting a mask on. Just a moment that sees what is visible, a moment of hearing sound, a moment of attachment, no one can control these or make a decision about these. Who can control what sound will be heard next. There are just the realities that can experience and that cannot experience, which are not self.

This is the subtlety of the Buddha’s teachings, about the understanding of the reality of life at this moment. While looking at Roxanne, is there metta or attachment? Can you choose to have only pleasant feeling, no unpleasant feeling when hearing someone’s voice?

Chin: If you are mindful, you can take things positively instead of negatively.

Sarah: Depending on conditions at that moment and on accumulations. Some people have accumulated a lot of kindness. Each moment of thinking now depends on accumulations.

Jon: We are not saying: no control in conventional sense. We decide to get dressed or take a shower.

We talk about what is happening at the level of momentary consciousness. From moment to moment there is no direction or control. What is seen is result of past kamma, we have no influence over that.

Trin: The more we listen, the more we appreciate the benefit of the teachings.

Chin: So long as we are not attached to the outcome.

Sarah: If there is a moment of attachment, it is conditioned.

Maeve: What can you do to develop understanding. People like to know what the formula is. Acharn always says that the question of “how” is motivated by attachment. Jon spoke about the subtlety of the Dhamma. It takes a very long time to know how learning takes place and how understanding develops. It takes long to let go of that “model”, of what we are used to. It is a long process of letting go of our ways of understanding, of attachment to understanding that arises again and again. You are not alone!

Nina.

2.30 Meeting on line, 10, 1

nina

Jun 23 #163600

Dear friends,

Nina: the first subject today was nimitta. Realities arise and fall away very rapidly and what can be experienced is only the sign or nimitta of a reality.

Sarah: explained that we can repeat the word nimitta but what about the understanding just now of what appears. She explained that we just think about the term nimitta and not understand the reality

now that experiences and the reality that does not experience. We cling to the meaning of the term. This leads to more doubt and it is the wrong Path.

Alan asked: How does the understanding of nimitta help the understanding of the present moment?

Sarah explained: If we do not know about nimitta there will be confusion. How can we be aware of seeing that has fallen away. In the beginning we just talk about the reality of seeing, of hearing without understanding nimitta. There is doubt about it how seeing can be known, how hearing can be known. Knowing about nimitta helps to explain how reality is experienced.

Jon: Attachment that is an unwholesome mental factor cannot arise at the same time as awareness, and yet it can be object of awareness. Awareness takes as object the nimitta of the reality that has just fallen away.

N: Realities fall away so fast. When we are thinking about a reality it has fallen away, it is nothing, never to return. It helps us to see that it is non-self.

Sarah: It is the characteristic of reality that can be understood, no matter one calls it nimitta or not.

Tam Chan: a question about following others in a group. They think that one should all wear an outfit of the same colour. She was told to just listen and not give her own opinion.

Sarah: there are different habits because of different accumulations. Whatever we do is conditioned. Even thinking: I will wear a different colour, or: speaking or not speaking, it is all conditioned. Understand what is conditioned at this moment.

Jon: It shows the conditioned nature of thinking. Should we do this or that concerns situations. Therefore there is no particular answer to this.

Sarah: Each way of thinking is conditioned. There can be understanding of reality at any time.

Nina

2.31 Meeting on line X, 2

nina

Jun 24 #163607

Dear friends,

There was discussion about truthfulness (sacca).

Sarah: spoke about truthfulness with regard to citta at this moment. "What is seen: pictures of friends on the computer screen or what is visible at this moment?"

Sukin: Usually self is leading the way. There can be understanding of that, and that is truthful.

Nina: We should know what we do not know. The level of understanding is still pariyatti (intellectual understanding). We should consider realities more, we did not consider enough. Confidence is very important. The Buddha would not teach what cannot be understood. Many lives of development of understanding are needed, the situation is not hopeless.

With Jeff: a discussion about metta and the way he helps groups of prisoners. He spoke about having metta for oneself.

Sarah: explained that metta is towards others, not towards oneself.

Jeff spoke about helping others in a conventional sense. The inmates have a very low opinion about themselves and they can learn to be kind to themselves in conventional sense.

Jon: explained that in Dhamma terms this would not be metta. Being less caught up in their situation would help them.

Sarah: all those bad experiences are all gone. "We all get lost in dramas of the past. Life is just at this moment. That is meant by truthfulness. It is not my thinking we find so important. We are stuck in the story. We should know the distinction between reality and situation. Understand seeing now, hearing now."

Maeve: The more your own understanding develops, the more are you able to help others.

There was a discussion with Roxanne about the ideas of her husband Chin. He had been a monk and he had a conventional idea of self improvement. The truth of non-self is difficult for Chin.

Jon: there is another way of explaining. Pointing out the conditioned nature of whatever appears. It is conditioned by factors that are beyond control.

Sarah: Can anyone decide what is seen at this moment? No control helps to understand anatta.

Nina

2.32 Meeting on line 10, 3

nina

Jun 25 #163617

Dear friends,

Tan Chan: Everything depends on conditions, just develop understanding.

Sarah: We have to understand what that “everything” is. Seeing now, no situation like “shall I speak out or not”. Just different moments of citta, cetasika and rupa.

There can be understanding that seeing is conditioned by visible object that impinges on the eyesense. If we just think of conventional situations we will never understand realities and what is meant by conditions. The understanding gets closer to the truth of life. We should know the difference between absolute truth and what is true in conventional sense. In conventional sense we can speak say that we go out and prepare a meal. In that way conditions will not be understood. In the absolute sense there are just a moment of seeing, hearing and other sense impressions, all day long, each one conditioned.

Discussion is useful, otherwise we are stuck with our own ideas, with understanding in conventional sense.

Nina: Understanding of nimitta again. A second meaning. It is not the understanding of what appears right now.

Jon: Learning all the meanings of a given term is more an academic exercise.

Another meaning of nimitta is: mark in the function of sañña (remembrance). Sañña marks the object and in terms of that mark there is nimitta. It is a completely different meaning of what we were talking about before, the nimitta of the presently arisen dhamma.

Nina.

2.33 Meeting on line, XI, 1

nina

Jun 30 #163718

Dear friends,

Conventional truth:

Alan: In reality there is no place.

Sarah: Memory conditions that kind of thinking. Carmen lives in the Netherlands, but I cannot see the Netherlands, nor taste it. At the moment of seeing, where are the Netherlands?

Jon: Conventional truth is a consensus. Absolute truth is the way things are. It is not what we read in the book.

Alan: Conventional truth can also be wrong.

Sarah: Wrong thinking conventionally can be with wholesome or with unwholesome consciousness. When we say thinking of science is unwholesome and thinking of Dhamma is wholesome there is no understanding of reality now. There are so many different cittas (types of consciousness). Each citta arises and falls away so rapidly.

Jon: It does not depend on the subject matter of thinking (whether citta is kusala, wholesome, or akusala, unwholesome).

Alan: knowing kusala and akusala is an advanced stage of insight.

Sarah: If there is no right understanding of nama(mental phenomena) and rupa (physical phenomena), it is all taken for my kusala and my akusala.

Jon: It is not a matter of insight. Also those who did not learn the teachings can know, to a degree, the difference between kusala and akusala. There can be kusala of the level of calm.

About the perfections: Tan Thanh: If I jump into the river to save someone who is drowning is that the perfection of generosity?

Sukin: The perfections are dhammas that lead to the other shore (out of the cycle of birth and death). Understanding is the only way. (N: good deeds should be accompanied by pañña that does not take kusala for self so that they are perfections.)

Tan: Shall I jump into the river or not?

Jon: Can you have pañña by choice?

Tan: You give yourself up to help someone.

Jon: This does not mean that he has eradicated the idea of self. To have kusala and help another person does not require understanding of the Buddha's teaching. It always depends on the mental state of the individual. No one can tell what mental state someone else has by looking at a person doing something.

Nina.

2.34 Meeting on line XI, 2

nina

Jul 1 #163726

Dear friends,

Maev: asks about the difference between unprompted and prompted consciousness (asankharika and sasankharika) in the case of kusala citta and akusala citta.

Sarah: Sometimes kindness is strong and no prompting is needed, sometimes it is weaker and it needs encouragement. There are just different degrees. We usually translate unprompted and prompted consciousness as strong or weak.

Carmen: When I go to the temple there is a lot of akusala, more than at home. Is it better not to go?

Sarah: Each moment of thinking, each act is conditioned. We never know. Who knows what will happen. Like in the case of being enslaved to alcohol. Whatever resolution one takes, it is just for a moment.

We do not know what will happen next. Instead of thinking: "shall I do this or that", it is more precious to understand how each reality is conditioned.

Sarah to Karina (whom is new, a friend of Azita): Is it useful to understand more what life is at this moment?

Karina: Azita always places me in the present moment.

Jon: Even when we think of the past or the future it is the present moment. We cannot avoid thinking of the past or the future, but understanding the quality of thinking is important. We each have different accumulated tendencies that condition us to react in a certain way. Accumulated tendencies cannot be changed. We need to accept them the way they are. The goal is more understanding.

Sarah: What is the present moment now? What is myself that is in the present moment? "I see, I think, I am here." What is this "I"? Can it be seen, heard or just thought about now? If there is no thinking about "I" there is not the idea that there is "my seeing".

This is the heart of the Buddha's teachings: different realities that experience like seeing, and realities that are experienced. Can you really find an "I"?

Azita: Is there always a mind-door process following a sense-door process?

Sarah: Also when a sense-door process is cut off sooner it cannot be followed by another sense-door process.

Nina: Pariyatti, intellectual understanding is not just study, but it always pertains to the present moment. There is already a beginning of a level of awareness.

Sarah: We have to come back to the present moment, otherwise we speculate about different situations. The intellectual understanding has to be about what is appearing now. There can be talking about details, but what about citta now?

Nina: Like seeing, this is immediately followed by thinking of what is seen. We are confused by thinking of what is seen.

Jon: Even on the intellectual level a good understanding is needed of awareness and what can be the object of awareness.

Nina: What is the present moment?

Jon: Different conditioned realities. All day long there are seeing, visible object, hearing, sound or thinking. Those are not difficult to

find, but they do not appear as they are. Having heard the description of them can be a condition for reflecting. Any moment of intellectual understanding is appreciating something that one has heard. Any moment of new understanding is a confirmation of something one has heard many times before and considered.

Nina.

2.35 Meeting on line XI, 3

nina

Jul 2 #163736

Dear friends,

Jon: Nimitta is usually translated as sign. It is an after image of a dhamma that arises and falls away.

(Here I repeat now a post Jon sent about nimitta): ¡For the purpose of our discussions here, the most significant meaning of ‘nimitta’ is that of the image left by the rapid arising and falling away of a given conditioned dhamma.

However, consider the following other contexts:

1 Nimitta as the mark made by sañña when it marks the object

As we know, sañña *marks* the object. The Pali term for the mark made by sañña is ‘nimitta’.

2 Nimitta as in the expressions ‘nimitta and anubyañjana’(sign and the details).

In MN 27 ‘The Shorter Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant’s Footprint’ (Bodhi transl, MLDB p269) we read:

15. “On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty.

(Here, ‘signs and features’ is a translation of the Pali ‘nimitta and anubyañjana’.)

A footnote to this passage reads as follows:

“This formula is analysed at Vsm I, 53–59. Briefly, - the signs (nimitta) are the most distinctive qualities of the object which, when grasped at unmindfully, can kindle defiled thoughts; - the features (anubyañjana) are the details that may subsequently catch the attention when the first perceptual contact has not been followed up by restraint.”

If this is a correct summary of the Vism passage (and that needs to be checked), then ‘nimitta’ here is a reference to something other than the image given off by the rapid rising and falling away of a conditioned dhamma.

3 Nimitta as the sign of the kammathana in samatha development

E.g., uggaha nimitta (‘learning sign’) and papibhāga-nimitta (‘counterpart sign’)

There is also nimitta in the expression ‘sankhara nimitta’ (‘sign of formations’) in Vism. This may be close in meaning to the ‘nimitta’ that is most discussed here. The commentary explains ‘sign of formations’ as referring to ‘the appearance of formations like graspable entities, which is due to compactness of mass, etc., and to individualization of function’.

Different contexts, different meanings.

Maeve: Acharn seems to be discouraging preoccupation with details. What is the balance, what is enough? Jon: Everyone has different accumulations as to interest in details. What is a balance for one is not for another. It is important to know where one’s level of understanding is. What is most useful: hear, consider and discuss what is arising at the present moment, rather than thinking of details.

Maeve: reality is completely different from what we think it is.

Jon: When hearing a voice there is already thinking of what is experienced. This is not the experience of sound. Those are different realities: the moment of hearing sound and thinking about a voice. This can be the basis of a better understanding of the present moment. Ann: Too many details takes you away from the present moment.

Sarah: There is attachment when trying to understand dhamma with an idea of self. What about now? Do not look for the grey area, for what cannot be known. One does not see that there is an idea of self when trying to work out the story. Alberto: There is already lots

of work to do with understanding seeing and visible object (the basic level).

Jeff: When I heard about the study of nimitta it reminded me about details in the study of the “Dhatu Katha” (one of the books of the Abhidhamma). Sarah: Acharn reminded us that there is a lot of detail that cannot be understood. She does not mind when anything is not clear and not understood. We cannot understand in the same way as the Buddha and his great disciples. At the end of this life it is all forgotten. We have to come back to what can be understood now. That is how pariyatti (intellectual understanding) develops.

Nina.

2.36 Saturday Discussion, 2

nina

Jul 7 #163818

Dear friends,

What is the truth of visible object? It cannot be a chair or the table. Only that which impinges on the eyesense. What is life? What is appearing now.

Sukin: everything is there, the table is there from yesterday to today. What is the meaning of suññatta?

Acharn: Suññatta is another word for anatta, meaning: completely gone. Each reality is anatta and suññatta. Nothing can be taken for permanent. It is no more. It cannot be changed and this is life, only in a moment.

All day there is an object that is seen, but seeing itself is not understood. Seeing does not appear as no one, no thing, as the reality that has no shape or form. The development of direct awareness is needed. When pañña is very weak there is doubt, but pañña can understand this as just a reality. Each reality has to be known before the idea of self is completely eradicated in daily life.

Nina.

2.37 Saturday discussion, II, 2

nina

Jul 13 #163873

Dear friends,

What appears now? Can it be anyone? Is it what arises and experiences to see? Life is not only seeing. Where is seeing right now? It is completely gone.

The room is still the room, the table is still the table. The moment of touching hardness just experiences hardness and then it is gone. It is no more. The hardness that is touched cannot return.

Everyone is going to die, this moment or soon, soon, soon. Everyone is going to the moment of not being this person anymore. It will be the end of this person. There are conditions from aeons and aeons to be this person. From this life there are conditions to be another person. There will be seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking and then they are gone.

It is a relief, because it is not me. Seeing just sees, no matter where, when and what, and then it is gone. There is no hurry to develop understanding. The understanding itself develops and it does so only at that very moment of understanding. It is the most valuable moment because it understands the truth, little by little; clearer and clearer and clearer, stage by stage. It realises that each word of the Buddha is the absolute truth. One sees the value of knowing what life is. Living for what? Just for Dhamma to appear as it is. For pañña to know what is what, rather than not knowing, from life to life.

Nina.

2.38 Saturday discussion, II, 3

nina

Jul 14 #163880

Dear friends,

Sarah: One is trying to solve the problems of the world, but nothing works. Only understanding of realities will work.

Accharn: One is following attachment, lobha. Lobha is hidden.

Sarah: Even trying to understand is lobha. That is why we have to listen again and again. Otherwise it is impossible to understand the truth.

Acharn: Where are you, where is seeing? No world, nothing stays. There is just the world appearing and disappearing, from life to life.

When there is no contact, phassa, can there be seeing? It cannot be understood by just hearing the words, but study and understand what is there now.

It is quite a relief, one cannot do anything at all. That is the meaning of letting go. Trying to do something is attachment. Letting go of the idea of self who is seeing, or letting go of what is seen as “something”. It has to be from one moment of understanding to the next moment of understanding. Each moment of understanding is very valuable.

Nina: I have to sigh, it is difficult to consider.

Acharn: You do not see lobha yet.

Nina: No, it is very difficult to see lobha.

Acharn: The Buddha, after his enlightenment, said that the Dhamma is very subtle. It is very, very difficult to understand lobha, but it can be known, little by little. One can understand that atta, self, is different from anatta, non-self. I can or I cannot is self, atta. Ignorance or understanding, it is not me.

Sarah: There is no hurry to understand or catch all the details. Thinking “I need to follow all” is not letting understanding develop naturally.

Acharn: It is more difficult than anyone can imagine because it has to develop with no one, no self.

Nina.

2.39 Saturday discussion II, 4

nina

Jul 16 #163891

Dear friends,

Life is just: going to die each moment. Every one is going to die. This person is no more, he cannot come back or return. Who knows what will be the next moment. Death and birth are very close, they are just two (successive) moments. These are very fast, no need to be afraid. The best thing in life is understanding of whatever appears. Is

there touching, seeing? They are all gone. This is the way of pañña, to let go of wrong understanding and of clinging to what is there no more.

It is quit a relief that there is no one, no self. This moment is not last moment; it is completely gone, completely different. Can there be the idea of being, of something, of the world, as before? At enlightenment the idea of self is completely eradicated.

Everything is as it is, there is understanding or no understanding. Enlightenment is not thinking or pondering, but the direct experience of the absolute truth, of the four noble Truths.

Sarah: Living naturally without that big burden of “I can do”.

Acharn: Suññatta and anatta. One has realized the truth of non-self, but not the arising and falling away of realities. One sees the danger of the arising and falling away, otherwise there cannot be vipassana ñana. The whole world is gone, there is nothing there.

Sarah: Suññatta refers in particular to that aspect of anatta which is the arising and falling away. Vipassana ñana is the direct understanding of the falling away of realities.

Acharn: One really understands that whatever is there it is only by conditions. No one can change it. No matter it is strong attachment, strong aversion, strong conceit, pañña can understand them as not me, no one, only a characteristic that is conditioned to arise. If there is no lobha, it is quite a relief.

Nina.

2.40 Saturday discussion, III, 1

nina

Jul 20 #163926

Dear friends,

We cling to everything. It is not enough to only know that. What is the object of clinging, just one at a time? When we say that we cling to the table, to people, it is not understanding of what is the object of clinging. There is clinging to what appears while there is seeing; it

does not appear as it is yet. There is clinging to what is not known. When there is the idea of something there, it is wrong understanding. The moment of more understanding of reality as it is, is the moment of letting go. When the object of clinging appears as it is, it appears as nothing.

Everyone is going to die, there is not I forever. Even when hardness appears, there is no attention to reality as not self. The truth is covered up, every day. It is the world of *suññatta*, nothing. The meaning of *suññatta* is: completely gone, never to return. In the beginning there can be the understanding of *anatta*, before experiencing the arising and falling away of realities. (N: the first stage of insight is knowing the difference between *nama* and *rupa*. Only at the third and fourth stage the arising and falling away of realities is known. The meaning of *suññatta* is completely fallen away.) Even now *anatta* does not appear as *anatta*; *pañña* develops stage by stage.

Nina

2.41 Saturday discussion, III, 3

nina

Jul 21 #163942

Dear friends,

Shall we just talk about what appears now?

When we think that there is something there, it is wrong. There are ignorance and clinging. Hardness is hardness and it is gone completely. But it appears as “something”. One believes that one sees Sarah and Jonothan, but what is there? No you. We never thought about what is no more, arisen and fallen away. Understanding the arising and falling away of realities is not the first stage of insight. (The first stage is knowing the difference between *nama* and *rupa*.)

Jon: Does understanding of individual realities like seeing, hearing, thinking, etc. helps to understand “no me, no self”?

Acharn: What is seen is not Jonothan, no table. Only that which impinges on the eyebase can be seen. It is so very tiny. It cannot condition the appearance of the arising and falling away of what is there, there are many levels of understanding. It has to develop from pariyatti (intellectual understanding) that is firm until it is sacca ñana (of the level of pariyatti) . There should be no expectation to have it, then it would not be conditioned by (the understanding of) anatta. One takes it for sati with an idea of “I can do, I can know” .

We just talk about realities, but what is reality now?

Jon: When we speak about not self, people think: the computer is not self.

Acharn: What is a self?

Jon: Just an ideaa.

Acharn: Whatever appears seems to be something. There is no understanding that it is conditioned.

Sukin: The self is always around the corner. There is a little understanding and then the self comes in again.

Acharn: One can understand the difference between intellectual understanding and direct understanding and be truthful.

Sacca parami, the perfection of truthfulness, is the moment of understanding truthfulness, together with viriya (energy), khanti (patience) and aditthana (determination).

The perfections are necessary, otherwise it is impossible to understand the truth.

Nina.

2.42 Saturday discussion III, 4

nina

Jul 24 #163967

Dear friends,

Sukin: We have to listen to many aspects of dhamma before we understand the truth of not me.

Acharn: There are many realities by conditions and this is life. No one, no self. It takes a long time until there is no expectation to have it.

Each reality has its own characteristic and nobody can change it. There is sacca ñana at level of pariyatti, of patipatti and of pativedha.

Sacca parami(the perfection of truthfulness) has to develop on and on with understanding, until it is pativedha (realization of the truth). Different levels.

When one tries very hard it is not sacca parami, understanding of the truth of no me, no self.

What can eradicate silabbata paramasa (wrong practice)? Only the magga-citta of the sotapanna (arising at the first stage of enlightenment). Wrong practice can be just a slight deviation of the eightfold Path. Pañña knows and can let it go.

Who can imagine that the whole world is lost (at the moment of insight knowledge, when there is no world). Pañña must be very keen when only one reality appears.

Understanding of the truth now is sacca parami. If there is no understanding of this moment, is there sacca (truth)? The “I: is there.

Each moment of understanding is parami. “No I” is sacca parami. Trying very hard to understand cannot be sacca parami, because actually there is no “I”. But when understanding is firm there is no “I” at all.

Nina.

2.43 Saturday discussion, IV, 1

nina

Jul 27 #163988

Dear friends,

Sarah to Lukas: on meditation, focussing on bodily feelings.

Acharn: Where is meditation? The purpose of the Buddha’s teachings is just understanding, not reading, remembering or translating.

What is awareness? Is it there or not? No one can know what awareness is without understanding. What is there now, is it known?

Sarah: Even awareness of the level of Samatha has to be developed with understanding. Otherwise one just focusses on an object without understanding. There is just the development of attachment.

Acharn: When we understand dhamma we understand anatta; dhamma cannot be taken for permanent, self or things. Each reality (of life) is conditioned, otherwise it cannot arise. There are so many different realities, arising and falling away, but no one knows. They appear as something, as nimitta, all the time. One takes them as permanent and that is the idea of atta, self. “I” see all day, there is no understanding.

One thinks that one can meditate, but what for, to understand what? What appears is not understood, not even to the degree of pariyatti (intellectual understanding). The teachings are for letting go of that which cannot be taken for anything. Even the simple question of “where are you now?”, cannot be answered. Right understanding of different degrees brings about different answers.

When one thinks “I am meditating”, the “I” is so strong. What is “I” and where is “I”? Gone completely. Can ignorance understand lobha? There is no “I” from the very beginning. Each word of the teachings shows that there is no “I”.

Understanding the Buddha’s teachings is letting go. Everyone is going to die, for sure. In the evening or tomorrow, no one knows. So, what is the best thing in life? Not wrong understanding of the idea of self, but right understanding (supported) by the perfections. There have to be the perfections, paramis, of patience, truthfulness, energy, determination. One begins to understand that there is no self. How long does it take? It depends on conditions. How can (the truth) appear as the Buddha had realized it at his enlightenment? It seems as if it is impossible. Understanding is covered up by ignorance, from moment to moment to moment.

There are three stages of understanding each of the four noble Truths, thus, there are twelve stages. (N: The noble Truth of dukkha has to be understood at the level of pariyatti, of patipatti, direct understanding, and pativedha, realization. Evenso for the noble Truth of the cause of dukkha, of the ceasing of dukkha and of the Path leading to the ceasing of dukkha.)

How can this condition abhisamaya, enlightenment? It can be, but only by conditions, by right understanding, not by “I”. The understanding of anatta does not mean just following words, that is not enough. Not by a self, only by dhamma that is conditioned and arises unexpectedly. This is the only way to gradually eliminate the idea of self.

Nina.

2.44 Saturday discussion, IV, 2

nina

Jul 28 #164002

Dear friends,

Hardness appears but there is no attention to it from morning to night. It is a reality that arises because of conditions. When one wants to experience something there is lobha, attachment, and it is there with “you”, with the idea of self. One should not force oneself (to have understanding), but one should see the precious moment of understanding. It needs consideration. Seeing is not hearing, thinking or liking. After hearing the teachings pañña experiences what was not experienced before, namely, anattaness. One can feel relieved from being enslaved to lobha which is there all the time. There can be letting go, stage by stage, very little at a time.

One learns Dhamma just to understand what appears now. By truthfulness it can be known how much understanding there is, or none at all, or not yet, or just a beginning. Sariputta had no idea that he would become enlightened after hearing the words from Assaji (about the cause of the arising of dhammas and their ceasing).

At the first stage of insight there is no doubt that what experiences is nama. There have to be the perfections, paramis, of patience, truthfulness, energy and determination to let go the strong idea of “I will do, I will try, I will know.” Only pañña can do that because it understands the truth.

We should not just say: “pañña, pañña”, but we should know what pañña is and what it understands. We should follow the Buddha’s

teachings by understanding, not just by repeating, reciting or trying to know with an idea of self. Only one reality is the object of right awareness with right understanding. When pañña is there it is no me, not self, there is only that reality appearing. There is no expectation how long or how short (it lasts).

Where am I? There is no where. Where is the seeing? No where. (N: This answers her question “where are you now?”) It arises at the eyebase; the eyebase falls away and so does seeing.

Sarah: Even when we think that it will take a long time, it is not me that takes a long time. Pañña takes a long time because ignorance has been accumulated for so long.

Acharn: The very moment of understanding is so precious because it can condition other moments of understanding, little by little. What appears has to be known otherwise there is ignorance. Even now, the reality that experiences does not appear as it is. No understanding yet, until time comes. When there is more understanding the subtlety of reality appears. It takes much longer to develop than one can imagine.

Nina

2.45 Saturday discussion, V, 1

nina

Aug 2 #164062

Dear friends,

Nina: Acharn said that if we cling to awareness of what appears now, such as seeing, it is not possible to understand the next moment. Do you mean by the next moment receiving-consciousness, sampatichana-citta?

Acharn: Is there sampatichana-citta now?

Nina: Yes, but it is not known.

Acharn: What can be known now?

Nina: Seeing, but not precisely. There is usually an idea of seeing. I was reminded that we talk a lot about seeing, that we repeat what we heard, instead of understanding the present moment.

Acharn: What should be the beginning of understanding dhamma as not self? All dhammas are (just) dhammas, no one, no self, no thing in it. The understanding of what appears now should be a little clearer. Otherwise it is not the understanding of realities and we keep on not understanding, not understanding. Listen to whatever we can hear now, to understand the truth, sacca, of it. Otherwise there is no letting go of self.

How can awareness arise? By anyone, by “I”? If there is no intellectual understanding there is no condition for the arising of right awareness and the understanding of what has been heard before; the understanding of what was hidden for aeons and aeons. It did not appear as it is, until hearing the teachings. There should be hearing until there are sufficient conditions for direct understanding naturally, unexpectedly, without desire or intention. This is the way to let go.

The perfections have to be developed not just one life. It takes aeons to develop the firm confidence that there is no one now. Reality cannot be changed into anything else. It is just conditioned to arise and then it is gone, never to be again. This is the only way to develop understanding little by little, until it is time not to be forgetful of: “now it is not me.” Hearing, considering, like, dislike, hardness, softness, all appear when there are conditions and then they are gone, never to return.

Nina.

2.46 Saturday Discussion V, 3

nina

Aug 4 #164084

Dear friends,

Sarah: There can be a beginning to understand that dhammas are anatta. No one can do anything or select an object. No one can choose what appears next.

Nina: We do not have to be aware of a particular reality.

Sarah: That would be the idea of self, not understanding naturally whatever appears. Wrong practice can come in any time, even in a dhamma discussion. Whatever arises, arises by conditions.

Acharn: What is meant by not clinging?

Nina: Clinging is the opposite of letting go. If there is no clinging one does not try to be aware.

Acharn: Can you tell anyone: don't try to be aware and don't cling?

Nina: Trying to be aware is clinging already.

Acharn: There is no understanding. From hearing the teachings one will study carefully. From the very beginning one can understand the word dhamma: a reality, no one. It is true. The truth of everything is: no self, uncontrollable, not me. In a day is there even a short moment of considering: it is not me? It may be just thinking. This means that the conditions are not sufficient. Even thinking about what is appearing now is very difficult. So, it is impossible to say: don't cling, don't try. Be truthful to this moment. Pañña knows what is right and what is wrong. Anything is conditioned, no matter what kind of thinking. No one can tell anyone: don't do this or that. Understand completely what is the truth. It takes a long time, but it does not matter. Understanding is the moment of letting go. Nina: When I ask a question I realize that the idea of self is behind it. But this is knowing by thinking. It is not the realization that my question is motivated by clinging to the wish to know.

Acharn: Until one has attained the first stage of enlightenment, the stage of the sotapanna, there is still the idea of self. It is so common, but it can be understood that there is no perfect understanding, even at the level of intellectual understanding. The Buddha spoke about Sariputta and Moggallana, but this does not mean that he did not realize the truth of nama and rupa. When the Buddha said: do good deeds, it is not a command. The value of what is right and what is wrong can be realized. Pañña understands the word of the Buddha about the truth all the time, the truth that there is not self, not me. Even when doing good deeds it is not "I" who acts, it is the function of dhamma. By the understanding of dhamma there can be a letting go of self, little by little. There can be more conditions for understanding of what appears now. There is no choice, it has arisen by conditions. No one can change this moment, it is so natural. It depends on pañña how much understanding there is.

When there is doubt, pañña knows it. When there is not enough pañña, it is me. It is just a matter of pañña to perform its function when it has developed to higher degrees.

Nina.

2.47 Saturday discussion V,4

nina

Aug 5 #164092

Dear friends,

Sarah: Nina, when you say: “I know that behind my question there is an idea of self, but this is only intellectual understanding”, then it seems that there is wishing it to be deeper and higher. There is wishing instead of knowing that what understanding there is, is conditioned at that moment. When there I wishing to have more understanding there is more clinging instead of just being contented with whatever is conditioned at that moment. It does not matter how little or how much understanding there is, but clinging hinders.

Nina: We see the usefulness of discussion, because then it appears what one does not understand yet.

Acharn: We are talking about now, but there is no understanding of what is now.

Nina: Often there is only talking about realities, that is a good reminder.

Acharn: We listen just to understand whatever appears now, naturally, by conditions. Realities cannot be changed or controlled. Can one select to know this or that moment? All five khandhas are objects of clinging, from birth. The point is just to understand and understanding is not “I”. It is a reality, different from ignorance. At the moment of understanding there can be letting go of clinging, of taking realities for “I”. Was there today any moment of thinking: “Not me”? Be truthful. The development of understanding will wear away the idea of self, at the moment of understanding. When the development is not natural,

the “I” is there. Without understanding how can there be patience to develop understanding? Happiness or unhappiness just appear for a moment. That is the world.

Sukin: When pañña increases do the perfections also increase?

Acharn: Without pañña there cannot be any perfection, parami.

Sukin: When we do anything for this or that (purpose), is it usually attachment?

Acharn: Certainly, until there is no “I” at all.

Nina.

2.48 Saturday discussion, V, 5

nina

Aug 7 #164115

Dear friends,

How can seeing appear as it is? (At that moment there is) nothing else in the world, only that which arises and experiences. There are many different levels of pañña. Sabba parīñña has to be after vipassana ñana. (sabba means all. A moment of vipassana ñana is very short and what has been realized at the moment of vipassana ñana has to be applied to all realities of daily life that appear.) Otherwise we just talk about the words and think about what appears. The understanding of not “I” begins little by little. It has to develop by understanding all realities in life, anything that appears as sabba parīñña, before higher pañña can develop. This is detachment from wanting a result, from clinging to the idea of self, as permanent, from life to life. There is no “I” at all. Life is so short and everyone is going to die, we do not know when. The truth of each reality is beyond expectation. The word dhamma means everything that is real. It is true right now. We can talk about seeing, because there is seeing. Seeing is real, it is dhamma. It cannot be “I” at all. This is not yet direct understanding of seeing yet. How can there be vipassana ñana which experiences each reality as a different one? The “whole” is “I”: I see, I hear, I think. They are

different realities at different moments arising by different conditions. There is no me, never more in samsara, the cycle of birth and death. The understanding of what is now appearing should be understanding (stemming) from hearing. This is intellectual understanding. How can there be the understanding of nama and rupa right now? It is not vipassana ñana which sees clearly. Vipassana ñana is very short, very rapid. As rapid as each moment now. There is no doubt about the object of vipassana ñana when it is there. Paramis, the perfections, are needed all the way. When there is hoping, there is attachment, lobha. Everything can be object of lobha. Whatever appears, pañña begins to understand the anattanness of realities, just from hearing, not from (direct) experience. The most difficult (to understand) is that it is by conditions, not by anyone. There are less conditions for pañña than for ignorance. Therefore, it takes a long way to “let go”. Even understanding by way of thinking is not easy.

Sarah: Sabba pariñña means to understand all. There are three pariññas arising in between the stages of insight, vipassana ñanas: ñata pariñña is the understanding arising after the first stage of insight (knowing the difference between nama and rupa). Tirana pariñña, understanding of investigation, arises in between the second stage of insight and the fifth stage. Pahana pariñña, understanding of overcoming, begins at the fifth stage of insight, understanding of dissolution, bhanga ñana. Sabba pariñña refers to all these pariññas.

Acharn: the moment of vipassana ñana is different from other moments (of pañña). Once it has arisen it is so clear. Sañña remembers the characteristic of anatta. But after that moment there are defilements and doubt (again). The first stage of insight is not enough. Pañña has to become keener and keener, stronger and stronger, to condition a higher level, stage by stage. How long it takes from one stage of insight to another, patience is needed. These are all anatta. The idea of self can be eradicated completely.

Nina.

2.49 Saturday discussion VI, 1

nina

Aug 10 #164145

Dear friends,

Nina: Resuming what Sarah had said about the *pariññas*, which is understanding of different levels arising in between the stages of insight.

Acharn: Realities arise and fall away, exactly the same as now. It depends on *pañña* how much understanding of that object there is. Only one *nimitta* of one reality can be known. (N: Realities arise and fall away very rapidly. For example seeing, there is seeing again and again and nobody could catch one moment of seeing, but the sign or *nimitta* of seeing can be experienced.)

Now while we are talking, visible object is appearing. But it does not appear well until *pañña* is more developed. Then just one characteristic appears and it begins to appear well. Characteristics do not appear as clearly as at the moment of a stage of insight, *vipassana ñana*, it is not *pariñña*; it is only understanding from learning (*pariyatti*). *Sacca parami* is the perfection of truthfulness. How much understanding is there of the object of seeing? Is it known as it is or not?

Sukin: When you say, it appears well, do you refer to *pañña*? *Vpassana ñana* is of a higher level than *patipatti* as I understand. (N: *pariyatti*, intellectual understanding, can, when it is firm enough, condition *patipatti*, direct understanding. When *pañña* is further developed there are conditions for *pativedha*, direct realization of the truth at the stages of insight and after that at enlightenment) Is *sati* also of a higher level?

Sarah: The level of *pativedha* is higher than *satipatthana* of of the level of *patipatti*. *Pativedha* is much clearer.

Nina: Is *vipassana ñana* already *pativedha*?

Acharn: Is a moment of *patipatti* different from now?

Nina: Now there is just a beginning of *pariyatti*, intellectual understanding.

Acharn: One can understand *patipatti* when it arises. It has to be different from understanding stemming from considering and intellectual understanding. *Sacca parami*, the perfection of truthfulness. One has

to be truthful to the truth. The truth the Buddha has enlightened is now. Citta arises, but if there is no patipatti there is no experience of the arising of any reality now. Each reality that is experienced has arisen but it is unknown. Pañña begins to understand. There is sati at the moment of talking about dhamma and understanding is there, and it is different from talking without understanding of the words. It is there now. Intellectual understanding is different from only listening and considering. A moment of hearing and no understanding is different from hearing and understanding.

Nina.

2.50 Saturday discussion VI, 2

nina

Aug 11 #164158

Dear friends,

Acharn: Sati that is directly aware is different from sati of the intellectual level. Without intellectual understanding how can direct awareness arise? It cannot arise by hoping, no one can do anything.

Sukin: Understanding helps to avoid wrong practice.

Acharn: We are talking about realities, not self. We have to be truthful: seeing is seeing, seeing is not thinking. Seeing just arises to see and falls away instantly, never to return.

Sukin: Sacca, truthfulness, prevents us from going the wrong way.

Sarah: When we think how little understanding we have, we have to remember that there is not my understanding at all. It is taken for my understanding and there is concern about the result. Sacca parami knows the wrong path. There is already the wrong path when there is the idea of my little understanding. Lobha comes in so quickly taking it for my understanding, and there is thinking: how can there be more understanding? That is not understanding of the reality that appears now. When there is understanding of seeing or hearing, there is no thought of how much understanding one has.

Sukin: We can also see the importance of the other perfections besides the perfection of truthfulness, *sacca parami*.

Sarah: Understanding is just for a moment. When we talk about *vipassana ñana* (stages of insight) and *pativedha* (direct realization of the truth), it is just the understanding of what appears now. It is just for a moment and then it is gone. It is not a matter of “I have this understanding”. Do not think of how little I have, but have confidence in the development of understanding itself. Do not think about when, how much or how little. There is not my understanding that is in this or that way.

Alan: There will always be the desire for understanding. The idea of self is always with us, but it can be understood. That desire always comes, that is our nature, by conditions. It can be understood, it is the wrong path. The idea of self is behind everything we do.

Sarah: That is the perfection of truthfulness, *sacca parami*. Clinging can be understood. Clinging to result is a hindrance to the Path. Clinging to self is the wrong way.

Alan: The moment of *vipassana ñana* is very short. The idea of self will come in, immediately afterwards. But at the moment of *vipassana ñana* there is the clear understanding that there is nobody there.

Nina

2.51 Saturday discussion VI, 3

nina

Aug 12 #164165

Dear friends,

Alan: At the moment of insight knowledge, *vipassana ñana*, there is no one who experiences.

Sarah: Even at the level of intellectual understanding, or even at the moment of *satipatthana* there is no one who understands. Only *pañña* understands, right from the beginning. *Pañña* begins to understand dhamma as *anatta*. Even now, when there is considering and intellectual

understanding of visible object, what is seen, it is known as just a reality, there is not someone who is seen. That understanding has to develop deeper and deeper, so that it becomes clearer and firmer. Thus, right from the beginning there is no one who understands.

Alan: Understanding illuminates, like a light that is shining. If the object is hardness, it shows up as it is.

Sarah: The commentary speaks about pañña as lighting up in a dark room. Pañña illuminates the object that is experienced so that it is seen more and more clearly until the level of insight is reached. At that level pañña and sati are so firm and strong. Even now when pañña begins to develop, at the level of intellectual understanding and the level of direct understanding, it begins to illuminate the object.

Alan: When pañña develops it can understand conditions for realities. Realities arise and fall away very rapidly, and so, how can conditions be understood?

Sarah: Like now, there is seeing. How could it arise without conditions for its arising? Seeing arises unexpectedly, it is not in anyone's control. Even at the beginning when there is intellectual understanding, dhamma can be understood as anatta. There is a beginning of understanding of the conditioned nature of dhamma and that understanding becomes firmer and firmer.

Alan: Realities arise and are then completely gone. The taste experienced at breakfast is gone. But tomorrow there is a similar taste. There is a continuity of a similar characteristic. You have not changed much in the last week. Realities have completely gone, but we have the idea: it is the same or similar. How can there be this idea that it is the same?

Sarah: Because of the rapidity of the arising and falling away of realities. Citta plays tricks all the time. It seems that the same object is seen for five or ten minutes, or taste is experienced for some time. Actually it is just rupa fallen away completely, never to retrain.

Alan: Rupa has fallen away and it conditions a similar rupa.

Sarah: The taste of your breakfast is conditioned, not by last week, but by temperature. The other rupas that arise together with taste (in one group) condition it. That taste seems similar to the one last week. But taste has fallen away and cannot condition taste now.

Nina.

2.52 Saturday discussion VI, 4

nina

Aug 13 #164171

Dear friends,

Acharn: At the first stage of insight (pañña knows) the reality that experiences and the reality that does not experience. (Now) the citta and cetasikas do not appear as they are, they do not appear well. We talk about whatever is now. At what level of understanding can there be conditions for awareness of just one reality at a time? (When) they all come together there is the idea of something. From learning the truth of whatever appears now, (realities appear) just one by one. Seeing just arises and falls away, and this is the truth that can be directly experienced. Everything comes from the truth of anatta. Even now while talking about realities. Hearing again and again and again can condition awareness of just one reality. There is understanding of what is meant by just one reality, only one. It develops little by little. There is no expectation about what is direct awareness, and how does it come (about)? When many things appear together they do not appear well. But when only one reality appears, how short it is. It is a test for oneself how much understanding there is of that which appears. It is very little and very subtle. From intellectual understanding and careful considering there must be conditions to let go of the idea of “I” who is seeing or hearing.

Alan: When we have the idea of a place or something like a cup, it indicates that there is no awareness of a reality, taking it for something.

Acharn: So what is there now?

Alan: Something.

Acharn: It does not appear well as it is. Know the difference between intellectual understanding and awareness.

Alan: The enlightened person knows the difference when there is clear understanding of a reality and when a concept is known. The un-

enlightened person gets mixed up. There is hardness when it is touched and then it is followed by thinking. When there is awareness a reality appears as it is. When it appears as something there is no right awareness of that reality.

Jon: Knowing a concept is not necessarily an indication of lack of understanding. Moments without awareness and understanding do not have to be moments of wrong view. Understanding is accumulated and not lost, it will condition a slightly different view of the world, of reality.

Nina.

2.53 Saturday discussion VI, 5

nina

Aug 14 #164187

Dear friends,

Acharn: The idea of self is there, more and more. Understanding has to begin; there has to be considering and understanding from the very beginning. Actually, there is no self when there are no citta, cetasika and rupa, no world. Whatever arises is there. When there is no understanding it is “something”. Before its arising, where is it? There is nothing. It just arises to experience only. It sees only. Does it appear well? No, until a moment of higher understanding. Direct awareness is conditioned. It is like letting go (and this is) from hearing, considering, little by little, naturally. Even right now at a moment of understanding there is sati, but it is not directed to any object.

Alan: When there is the intellectual understanding of anatta, there must be sati.

Acharn: It is only intellectual understanding of citta, that now arises to experience. Without this understanding there is no condition to be aware of a reality now. There is no selection, no control if there are conditions for its arising. It all depends on conditions, whatever arises, even the moment of samma-sati, right awareness. What about pañña? When it just begins only one object appears, even right now, but no

understanding. When there are enough conditions there is not just thinking. How much pañña is there when it just begins to be aware? Sati does not show up, whatever appears. Pañña begins to be aware of a reality by anattanness. Is the understanding enough or not yet? It is very weak, but it is there. It is the beginning of the level of direct awareness but not as clear as vipassana ñana (insight knowledge). We can imagine what it means: appearance of just one object. We begin to understand just that one object without thinking. Thinking is conditioned to think.

Tam Thanh: When you ask: where are you, and my answer is: not on the table, is that correct?

Acharn: How can there be the understanding whether it is good enough? Only pañña knows. At the moment of understanding realities there is no one at all. Can the hardness be somewhere? In the room? It just arises and falls away.

Alan: This moment cannot be lost. When we do not understand it, it is lost and we waste our life.

Acharn: If nothing arises, where are you? It seems that realities are together, but when there is direct awareness of one characteristic it appears well. Realities arise by conditions. The truth is always covered up. There is an idea to have only this object and no other objects.

Sarah: Begin again now, all understanding is gone.

Acharn: The “I” is there, there is clinging to everything that is not known. When hearing the word sati, it seems that we understand, but when it arises there is no doubt about direct awareness. Each day is like a test for understanding. We get closer to understanding the virtues of the Buddha. How can anyone have such understanding? It takes a long time to be truthful. There is no one, otherwise it is I who knows. Then the truth is covered up.

Nina.

2.54 Saturday discussion, VII, 2

nina

Aug 18 #164215

Dear friends,

Acharn: all have to be understood as anatta, otherwise there is no condition for direct awareness to arise. It is impossible, because there is a lot of ignorance and attachment. The understanding of no self is firm when it is *sacca ñana*. At the moment of direct awareness it (understanding) shows itself as anatta. Any moment of *pañña* arises with the understanding of anatta.

Nina: You say that every moment is *lobha* (attachment). That is very hard to understand.

Acharn: If the Buddha did not tell us who can understand the *asavas* (intoxicants). After three moments (after seeing which is *vipakacitta*, there are three more moments of *citta* before the *javanacittas* arise which are *kusala citta*s or *akusala citta*s) they (the intoxicants) are there, unknown. There is no understanding of what appears.

Nina: It is very useful that you remind us of the *asavas*. They are so subtle and hardly known.

Acharn: Actually there is no me. We do not know the next moment. There is seeing and if there is no understanding of seeing as a conditioned reality there must be an idea of self and attachment to that. Nothing can eliminate wrong understanding but right understanding. There are just conditioned realities arising and falling away all the time, unknown, because they cannot be known by ignorance and attachment. There is seeing which experiences and there is what cannot experience but which just impinges on the eyebase and is then gone. It takes time before ignorance is worn away little by little. Understand the perfection of truthfulness, *sacca parami*. Be truthful to the truth. Without conditions nothing can arise. *Vipassana ñana* (insight wisdom) can eliminate *lobha* and ignorance from time to time. The first stage of insight cannot understand the arising and falling away (of realities), but it sees perfectly the difference between *nama* and *rupa*. Now there is seeing. There is not a high level of understanding. Its function is just to see. There is seeing and there is that which is seen, one by one. A moment of seeing is so short, it appears as *nimitta* (N: There are many moments of seeing arising and falling away very rapidly; no one can catch one moment, but the sign of it, *nimitta*, appears.) One can see how much ignorance there is, from moment to moment, all day long.

Nina.

2.55 Saturday discussion, VII, 3, 4

nina

Aug 19 #164229

Dear friends,

Acharn: Now there is doubt about what appears and what experiences.

Nina: When nama and rupa are not distinguished from each other, does it mean that one takes them together? How is that, it means that one takes seeing and visible object together?

Acharn: From hearing, study and considering one knows that what is experienced cannot be that which sees. Do not forget what is heard: what experiences has no shape and form. At the moment of experiencing the characteristic of seeing it is known as that which experiences. You do not have to call it seeing. Just understand that characteristic. The reality which sees is this moment of seeing. This is the way to understand realities as no one, no me. Because there is that which experiences all day, from moment to moment, unknown. It appears as something all the time. The perfections of energy, patience, truthfulness and determination are necessary.

Sarah: When realities are understood as dhamma, seeing is just that which experiences and visible object is the reality that is experienced. One is thinking about a story of seeing being something difficult (to understand). When one thinks "What is seen is something" and (that here is) thus no clear understanding of the distinction between nama and rupa, that is because there is no understanding of the realities themselves. This is meant by taking them together, a story about things and people. Acharn spoke earlier about when there is time to be aware. When one believes that "I can do", it cannot be a condition for awareness, but it is taken for awareness. This is the wrong path, wrong understanding and wrong awareness. Focussing on seeing or on visible

object, trying to catch realities is the wrong path and it cannot lead to direct awareness and direct understanding. Lobha is unseen but it is there, even in a dhamma discussion. Trying to catch the word or the meaning is no condition for direct awareness.

2.55.1 VII, 4

(Alberto's transcription):

A. Sujin: Can there be direct awareness without direct understanding, together? That's why we try to think about direct awareness, but what about understanding? Without understanding it cannot be direct awareness, because: direct awareness of what? And what conditions it to understand directly that as it is: because right understanding is not enough! So it all depends on understanding. When there is little understanding why can't there be direct understanding, yet? Because understanding is not enough. So right understanding knows that: it doesn't matter at all the trying to have it, the wish to have it, because all depends on conditions, and the condition for right or direct awareness must be the intellectual understanding firm enough to be *saccañāna*. Not changing to trying to understand, because that's not the way: it hinders, and that is lobha, and the idea of self is still there, very strong because the understanding is not enough. So all depends on understanding, stage by stage.

Even if hardness is appearing now, no moments of direct awareness yet, because understanding is not enough to understand. With more *saccañāna* of that which has that characteristic as... we don't have to think about nimitta because that would never be the *pañña* which can experience just one, never: because realities arise and fall away in split seconds. So by way of understanding the *vāra* (round or series of citta within a process) and the *dvāra* and the *citta* which arises, one by one, little by little, we understand that *pañña* cannot arise right after seeing, immediately, it's impossible, that's why realities even now or when or where appear as nimitta, but without the paramattha dhamma, without absolute realities there cannot be nimitta, but the nimitta indicates that at that moment there must be realities arising and falling away unknowingly all the time, so very rapidly. So only *pañña* can eliminate

wrong understanding with attachment, little by little, otherwise there must be attachment to: "I just want to experience it as I have heard". As long as there is the idea of I is wrong: attachment is there, wrong understanding is there.

So that is the very very fine and very very difficult way, only pañña from moment to moment can begin to understand how it is, how difficult: it's so subtle, but it can be understood stage by stage, as it is. No one can change the characteristic of hardness at all, even right now, but not enough understanding for direct awareness which knows that it's only there for just when it appears, and even while it does appear there must the arising and falling away of that reality, so very rapidly that can appear as hardness. And this understanding will gradually, very slowly eliminate the idea of self. Very firm in the beginning, enough to condition direct awareness unexpectedly, to understand the anattanness of all dhammas, even that one.

(end of Alberto's transcription)

Nina.

2.56 Saturday discussion VII, 6

nina

Aug 21 #164254

Dear friends,

The cetasika sañña, remembrance, accompanies each citta. Acharn: No one knows it is there, even now there is sañña. Thinking thinks about what sañña marks and remembers. If we do not talk about the Buddha's teachings we do not know sañña as not self. It takes time to develop understanding at the moment of awareness, on and on and on, by conditions. The fourth noble Truth is the Path and there is no doubt about the Path. Does the object appear well?

Nina: Not yet.

Acharn: Not as it is. From hearing and considering, the difference (will be known) between that what appears as "something" and

that which arises and falls away. Hardness, not one moment, but several moments arise and fall away, that is why it does not appear well. Even though there are many *manodvaravajjana cittas* (*cittas* arising in a mind-door process), it does not appear as mind-door (*manodvara*).

Sarah: For those not familiar with Pali I should explain about *manodvaravajjana-citta*. It seems that seeing lasts and there is “something” that is seen all the time. One sense-door process (is followed by) many mind-door processes and this is covered up by the idea of “something” that is seen.

Nina: I am glad you say this. I was just wondering why so many mind-door processes are unknown. It seems that seeing lasts.

Sarah: Seeing “something”. I can see Nina for a long time, but actually there is just one very brief moment of seeing what is visible, (followed by) other *cittas* in the eye-door process that do not see anything, then there are *bhavanga-cittas* (life-continuum) and many mind-door processes. The mind-door processes *cittas* think of shape and form, the idea about Nina. Because of attachment they cling to the story, cling to shape, to colour and form, all conditioned by *sañña* that marks and remembers. It seems that seeing lasts. Just as in the case of my (injured) foot, it seems that the painful experience is lasting a long time. There are so many mind-door processes, thinking of the form, the painful foot. There is just one moment of bodily experience and then many mind-door processes, not understanding for what they are, because of the idea of “something” experienced. The perfection of renunciation, *nekkhamma*, develops with understanding, gradually, renouncing the clinging to the idea of “something”. So very gradually, but it all has to be through the development of understanding.

Nina.

2.57 Saturday discussion, VIII, 1

nina

Aug 24 #164290

Dear friends,

Nina: I find it helpful that Acharn often says that understanding arises suddenly, unexpectedly. We never know the next moment. We can make beautiful plans, but we do not know the outcome, this depends on conditions. We had a heatwave and I had no help and there was a lot of washing. Sarah had her foot injured. These are all situations. When we consider paramattha dhammas, absolute realities, we understand that we never know the next moment of seeing, of body-consciousness. It is helpful to consider this.

Acharn: What is the best thing at that very moment?

Nina: To be aware but that depends on conditions.

Acharn: They are all dhammas, but the truth of it does not appear. It does not appear as the object of a moment of experience.

Nina: We forget that and we are absorbed in the “story” we are thinking of.

Acharn: It is not self, nothing can be done at all. Just remember that all realities are conditioned and that they are there just for that moment and then gone. They are not permanent, and this is so very helpful. They cannot be taken for “I” or “something”. Just understanding is the best. Even just very little, it does not matter. It takes time for sankhara khandha to develop little by little. (N: Sankharakkhandha includes all cetasikas apart from remembrance and feeling. It includes all wholesome cetasikas such as sati, pañña, energy, confidence. These have a function in the development of pañña). As to what is seen, there is nothing there. Whatever is appearing now is the truth. No one can change it or do anything, nothing is “I”. Dhamma cannot be anything else, it has to be as it is, right now. But pañña is not enough to let go of clinging and of taking it for “something” all the time. But it is the truth to be known. As pañña does not grow sufficiently it is developing little by little, by sankharakkhandha. No one, no self at any moment at all. Just learn from the teachings of the Buddha that all dhammas are anatta. Not just the words, but it is right now. Understand that no one makes it (reality) arise, but that it is there. The arising and fallen away (of realities) is not known yet. What appears now is gone, all the time. There is momentary death (of realities, khanika marana): the truth that everything that is conditioned to arise has to fall away. It

is impossible to directly experience (the truth) just from understanding a few words of the teachings. But one should hear it again as a reminder and understand that the truth is the truth, no one, no self. For example, right now there is hardness. Hardness cannot be tasted or smelt. When it is experienced it is hard. The truth is covered up by ignorance: one just takes it for “something” when it is there. Even when one does not yet know what is there, there is (already) clinging. Even in a sense-door process, a few moments after seeing, there are ignorance and attachment. Can this be known or experienced? It is now. Can it be experienced as no one? It takes time. How long have ignorance and attachment be there as “something”. All gone, is that true?

Sarah: We spend a lot of time thinking of difficult situations such as no helper when there is a lot of washing, a heatwave. We completely forget that there is seeing now, hearing now, thinking now. The difficulty is not the washing or the (injured) foot, but the clinging and the aversion. It passes instantly, not my dosa (aversion) and my clinging. At the moment of seeing there is no difficulty, or at a moment of kindness, no difficulty. The difficulty is not the situation, but the moments of akusala (unwholesomeness) that arise and pass.

Nina: Your words are very consoling.

Jon: When talking about impermanence at the conventional level it is not the teaching of the Buddha. They are only reminders of the true nature of the present reality.

Nina.

2.58 Saturday discussion VIII, 2

nina

Aug 25 #164298

Dear friends,

Ann: asked what the function is of citta in the javana process, thus when it is kusala citta or akusala citta.

Acharn: Do you have to call it kusala and akusala? If there is no understanding of citta as not self, there is only thinking about the words. How can one understand it is kusala or akusala without understanding the reality which experiences an object. Now there are realities, we just talk about realities, about the “story” about realities, while realities arise and fall away in splitseconds. It is real, it is now, but one does not understand the truth of it as not self. There is only the idea about kusala or akusala. It is only the word, but the characteristic which experiences is not realized. There is just thinking about words.

Ann: There is attachment, wanting to understand. Aversion and attachment are cetasikas. Ann wanted to know what the function of citta is at the moments of javana.

Sarah: No matter we talk about seeing, kusala citta or akusala citta, citta is always the leader in experiencing (an object). Citta, the innermost, is always the leader. It has the function of experiencing the object. Citta itself is pandara or clear. (N: It can be accompanied by akusala cetasikas, but the function of citta is just experiencing an object. That is why it is by nature clear.) There was a discussion about outer āyatanas and inner āyatanas (N: āyatana is the coming together of different realities in the experience of an object). Sarah mentioned: The inner āyatanas are eye-sense, ear-sense nose-sense, tongue-sense, body-sense, and all cittas included in manāyatana (translated here also as mind). The outer āyatanas are visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, tactile objects, and cetasikas and subtle rūpas all included in dhammāyatana (translated here as mental phenomena).

Acharn: At the moment of seeing, are there inner and outer rupas? Can visible object be an inner rupa?

Sarah: It just depends on conditions what object impinges (on a sense base) and what citta arises at any moment. There is not anyone doing anything. When there are conditions for hearing to arise, there are no conditions for tasting or touching.

Jon: Sense bases arise throughout life (N: produced by kamma) but there needs to be a supportive kamma to experience a particular object.

Sarah: Visible object may impinge, but there may not be conditions to experience that visible object. There have to be the coming together of inner and outer āyatanas.

Acharn: can anyone make the eyebase arise? What appears has

to arise by many conditions. What conditions it? Without conditions there cannot be any eyebase or earbase... There is no “I”. No self. By (the development of) understanding little by little, there are conditions for letting go the idea of self. If we think of inner and outer without understanding conditions, can that be true? Impossible... What is the use of clinging to what is all gone. There is the idea of self all the time because of ignorance. The self is thinking about no self.

Nina

2.59 Saturday discussion, VIII, 3

nina

Aug 26 #164307

Dear friends,

Acharn: When there is understanding, in so far as it is possible for that level, it begins to develop, to understand the truth. It is better than to know how many thousands there are of *vara*(N:round or series of *cittas* within a process), but not understanding of the characteristic that appears as it is. There is “something” and “I” all the time. Life is so short, ignorance and attachment have been accumulated for a long time. It is best to understand (reality) as it is, not taking it for something permanent. One may think of the lifespan of *rupa* and *citta*, but it is impossible to experience that. What is the use? Just know that nothing is permanent, (reality) just appears and disappears. (There are) seeing or hearing without there being understanding of the nature of no self, only that which experiences. Understanding has to be developed from a very low level to a very high level, by considering the truth which appears. There are so many layers of understanding. For example, attachment to seeing is not as much as attachment to the idea of me or self. There is less attachment when understanding the characteristic of anything as not self. That which is seen is there, together with hardness or softness, with the four primary *rupas* (N: Visible object arises in a group or *kalapa* of *rupas*, consisting of the four Great Elements and

other rupas). We cannot make anything arise, they are conditioned realities, conditioned by many conditions.

Nina.

2.60 Saturday discussion VIII, 4

nina

Aug 27 #164321

Dear friends,

Azita: It is said that we take everything for mine, through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the bodysense and the mind. Mind is vague for me.

Acharn: What is the mind?

Azita: Thinking. . .

Acharn asked whether there is citta before seeing and after seeing, and whether that is the mind? Acharn: What we take for mind is what experiences an object. We are not used to the word experience. There is no idea of that which is seeing now; that which arises by conditions and experiences visible object. We take it as seeing, but it is a reality that experiences visible object. We know the word seeing, but we do not understand the nature of it. Each reality has its own characteristic, its own nature. When we talk about the nature of reality, no matter what is there, it is that which can experience or that which cannot experience. We begin to forget the word mind. . . The mind is only the experiencing, the citta and cetasikas.

Sarah: Mind is just a translation of citta. “Mano” means any citta.

Maeve: quoted Acharn, saying that the self thinks about no self. She was wondering whether it is ever possible to understand anatta.

Sarah asked whether she could make seeing arise, and whether there is any choice.

Acharn: It means anatta, no one there, (arisen) by conditions. You cannot think about what you have not seen before. When it is seen, it can be a condition for thinking about that which sañña (N: the cetasika

remembrance arising with every citta) remembers... So many things are unknown. There is seeing right now. What do you think about that? You hear about no self, no one, and you consider carefully whether it is true. One can know how little understanding there is of the truth. At the moment of seeing, is it you? Where is you? Seeing sees, can we find the “you”? It is down deeply rooted in the mind, so that it is taken for “something”... Seeing arises and falls away by conditions. At the moment of hearing it is not there, so it is gone completely, but you still think of that which is seen, and there is no understanding of the reality which sees. That is the moment of taking that for self. Or the object is taken for “something”, all the time. Until the enlightenment of the Buddha. He taught us what he had enlightened. So we begin to understand the truth of whatever is there to be known.

Nina

2.61 Saturday discussion VIII, 5

nina

Aug 28 #164335

Dear friends,

Different moments of realities arise and fall away so very rapidly.

Acharn: That is why we learn to understand the very great wisdom of the Buddha, with higher understanding to let go all akusala, hatred, attachment. Pañña develops among all those akusala. It is not strong enough to let go of the idea of self which is very deeply rooted. Ignorance (moha), attachment (lobha) and aversion (dosa) as the roots of all akusala are there, unknown. There is ignorance as long as there is no understanding of the characteristic that is now appearing. Because of hearing (the teachings) there is the beginning of thinking and considering carefully what is true and what is not true. It has to develop more and more and more, until the other higher level of understanding is there, by conditions, from understanding the truth of what is there. By considering wisely, otherwise it cannot arise again. The truth (one has

to consider) is whether there is something or self now. Can anyone find the self when it is not real, not true? The word of the Buddha is *vaca sacca*: *vaca* is word and *sacca* is truth (in Pali). The truth of everything which is there by conditions, they are only different realities. Thinking thinks of the object of thought, seeing experiences visible object, hearing experiences sound, only in a moment and then gone, never to return. Ignorance and attachment cling to that as permanent. What appears arises and falls away in splitseconds, unknown. So long as that impinges on the eye it is there, it is real, but after that no more. That is the higher developed *pañña* which can directly experience the arising and falling away of a reality. A *nimitta* (sign) of a reality, not just one unit of it. How many things are there, how many arise? If there is no experiencing it cannot be known as it is, because of the rapidity of the arising and falling away of realities. (The understanding of) this will gradually eliminate attachment to the idea of self. It is so very strong, it is there from aeons until now. We understand the word *parami*, perfection. Without the *paramis* it is impossible to understand that which is hidden all the time. All realities do not appear. Even though they arise, they do not appear. Like *virīya*, effort which does not arise with seeing, hearing and the other sense-cognitions, or with other *ahetuka*(rootless) *cittas*. But at the other moments it is there. Who knows it when it does not appear? But when it appears ignorance which does not understand realities conditions the idea of "it is I who tries". It is not you or anyone. The development of understanding is this moment of understanding, little by little... This conditions direct awareness, unexpectedly. This shows the anattanness of each reality. When there is right understanding there is no expectation, (what arises is) only by conditions.

Jon: The understanding of realities as they are gradually eradicates the idea of self. We have to keep in mind that the eradication of self does not mean no people and things. They are concepts of the conventional world and necessary to have. We have to keep in mind the distinction between the wrong idea of self and (thinking of) concepts of people and things.

Nina.

2.62 Saturday discussion IX, 1

nina

Aug 31 #164361

Dear friends,

Saturday Discussion, IX, 1.

Achary: Viriya, effort, does not appear as object yet. Is there still someone having viriya now? Only one reality can be the object, it depends on how much understanding there is. Pariyatti (intellectual understanding) should be firmer and firmer until it is so clear that nothing can be taken for self. It depends on conditions what will be the object of pañña at the moment of direct awareness. The actual reality, not just the word.

Sarah: I would like to bring up the word clear, pandara. You just mentioned that pañña understands clearly. Every citta is clear, pandara (N: Because its only function is knowing clearly an object). We often talk about confidence, saddha, how it keeps citta clear.

Achary: Does any object appear clearly enough now?

Sarah: No, only at the level of vipassana ñana (insight knowledge).

Achary: just listen to the words eyesense, visible object, seeing. They do not appear clearly, but they are there. Without pañña they cannot be known as they are, they are “something”, because they arise and fall away very rapidly. There has to be pañña which is not intellectual understanding (N: but direct understanding). But without pariyatti there is no condition for sati to arise with understanding of any reality right now. We talked about hardness, does it appear?

Sarah: Only when understanding is very firm.

Achary: There can be sati with understanding of the “story” (of realities), different from sati which is directly aware by conditions; it has to be by conditions. It conditions more confidence in anatta. In the beginning sati sampajañña (sati and pañña) is not as clear.

Sarah: Only when pañña knows clearly, there is saddha, confidence, in the sense of discarding the hindrances and purifying the citta?

Achary: We go a little too far. We have to consider from moment to moment. When there is direct awareness, for example of hardness,

but no understanding, it is “my leg”; there is not understanding of the arising and falling away, no understanding of it as it is. There is intellectual understanding which knows the difference between intellectual understanding and direct understanding and awareness. The intellectual understanding develops so that it can condition direct awareness. That is different from intellectual sati (sati on the pariyatti level). Pañña begins to understand at what moment there is direct awareness and at what moment there is not. Pañña knows the truth very naturally; it is uncontrollable and dependent on conditions only. That is clearer than intellectual understanding but not as clear as vipassana ñana.

How can vipassana ñana arise? There should be no expectation, it depends on conditions. Like in the case of Sariputta. How many moments of understanding were developed from life to life? Until there were conditions for such understanding, by hearing the words of Assaji.

Just develop understanding, no expectation. The word clear has more meanings. It seems that everything is so clear at the moment of seeing, with good eyesight, but no pañña. It cannot be so clear because there are other things around. (When there is vipassana ñana) there is only that (one object), by conditions. It is much clearer than the moments which are not vipassana ñana.

Shall we go on to saddha? Is there saddha now? It does not appear as the object of awareness. We can try to think of the characteristic of saddha. When there are no lobha, dosa, or moha, when there is no akusala, citta is clear. There are many sobhana (wholesome) cetasikas, but one (cetasika) that is clear. It makes the other cetasikas clear too.

Nina

2.63 Saturday discussion, IX, 2

nina

Sep 1 #164376

Dear friends,

Nina : When I hear the word confidence, I am inclined to confuse it with lobha; I feel safe and secure. I know that this is wrong, it can only

be *sobhana*.

Acharn: What about it when you hear the word *anatta*? Is it true, is it real? Is it firm (confidence) or not yet?

Nina: not firm.

Acharn: A little confidence or very strong?

Nina: Very little.

Acharn: So, you understand what is meant. We cannot use any word to represent the truth of reality so clear, impossible. Even if it is there, no word. But the characteristic is there to be experienced as it is, as not self. It has its own characteristic when it appears. Understanding is there which knows its characteristic; it shows up as it is, no one there at all.

Sarah: Acharn, you said earlier that confidence can condition understanding of a reality and that it is clear from *akusala*, that it purifies. Can we say *saddha*, that which purifies, is a condition for that understanding?

Acharn: At the moment of understanding, it cannot be just understanding itself. It needs other realities to support it, as a condition to understand better and better. There must be *sati* too, if there I no *sati* there is no understanding. *Sati* is aware of a characteristic which is there. If there is no awareness, can *pañña* understand that characteristic? *Sati* is not *pañña*, but it is needed, it has to go with *pañña*. When we say confidence, we do not mean just *saddha*, but confidence in the truth. It means *pañña* that develops more, so the confidence is more. That which is clear from *akusala* is *saddha*. When *pañña* is there, it knows what is right and what is wrong.

Sarah: A proximate cause of confidence that is often given is the Triple Gem that is worthy of confidence. It has to be with understanding.

Acharn: That is why the right way is *satipatthana*, not *saddhapatthana* or *viriyapatthana*. Even though there are other wholesome factors, without *sati* it is impossible for *pañña* to develop. Each factor has its own conditions and they condition each other.

Nina: You said that confidence is not just *saddha*, so it is more?

Acharn: Are you sure that the truth is that there is no self?

Nina: Not sure. I am a beginner, so, not sure. I am sure only by intellectual understanding.

Acharn: When there is more understanding, one is more sure that it has to be: no self. More than hearing for the first time about no self. When one learns more, understands more, there is more confidence and one is surer, more, and more and more. Is that saddha, it is not pañña.

Nina: So, when you say can you make seeing arise, nobody can, it makes it a little clearer that there is no self.

Acharn: Are you sure?

Nina: For a beginner only.

Acharn: The sotapanna (who has attained the first stage of enlightenment) is more sure than an ordinary person, because of pañña. Pañña is one reality and saddha is another reality. Without pañña there can be saddha, no akusala. But it is not as wholesome as with more understanding.

Nina.

2.64 Saturday discussion, IX, 3

nina

Sep 2 #164379

Dear friends,

The four Great Elements (hardness or softness, heat or cold, cohesion and motion or pressure) arise with at least four other rupas in a group, kalapa. They are called indivisible rupas. Alberto asked whether these cannot be separated.

Acharn explained that only one of these rupas arising in a group can impinge on the relevant sensebase and be experienced. When visible object impinges on the eyesense the other rupas in that group do not impinge on the eyesense and are not experienced.

Acharn: When it is tangible object it cannot be seen. It is there when there is touching. Why are only three rupas tangible object? The rupa that is hardness or softness can be touched, it is sometimes hard, sometimes soft. Then there is the rupa that is heat or cold and the rupa that is motion or pressure. Where is the Water Element, cohesion? It

holds the other rupas in that group together, so that they cannot be apart or separated. Whenever there is touching, it just touches what is hot, or hard, or motion.

There was also a discussion on the ayatanas. Sarah: Any rupa is only ayatana when it appears. At the moment of touching hardness, only the hardness is experienced, only one (in a group) impinges. When hardness is experienced we know that there are at least seven other rupas in a kalapa but these are not impinging. Hardness is the ayatana at that moment. There is the coming together of bodysense, citta and hardness.

Alan: Does it depend also on kamma which of the three great elements are experienced? The answer is that the hardness itself must have impinged on bodysense, but heat or cold have not. It depends on kamma whether there is the experience of the hardness which has impinged. Only one rupa at a time can impinge.

Acharn: Even while one is fast asleep are there ayatanas? How many ayatanas are there when sleeping? When we talk about ayatana at the moment of seeing, we talk about what must be there at that moment. What is meant by ayatana? At the moment of seeing, how many are there?

Alberto: Four: eyebase, visile object, mind-base, dhamma-base.

Acharn: While sleeping, how many?

Albert: Mind-base (manayatana) and dhammayatana.

Acharn: When we talk about objeccts, it is one subject, and when we talk about ayatanas it is another subject. But they are all dhammas. We talk about dhatus, elements, or ayatanas to be conditions for the understanding of no self. They are all dhammas. They do not appear clearly yet. When pañña is there it begins to understand a little until all can be objects of no self. For example, at the moment of seeing who knows phassa cetasika (contact)? Is it there, is it ayatana? No need to classify, but they are there depending on what object citta experiences. But there must be ayatanas. Citta cannot arise without cetasika, but cetasikas are not manayatana (the ayatana of mind), but dhammayatana. This is just an explanation of the truth that they are not self. If we try so hard to understand this, what level of pañña is there to understand that? Can it show up at the level of intellectual understanding? The point is not to find this out, but to understand

better and better that there is no one at all. What about the innermost reality which is citta, manayatana? Can it appear now? Whenever it arises it experiences. It is manayatana, it is different from cetasika. But manayatana and dhammayatana (cetasikas) arise together. Eyebase and visible object are ayatanas at the moment of seeing. But this does not mean that there is nothing else, there are many other things. But what is there at the moment of seeing as ayatana? That is all, otherwise there is clinging.

Nina.

2.65 Saturday Discussion IX, 4

nina

Sep 3 #164383

Dear friends,

Alan: There is the word inside or inner used for citta. In what sense is it used?

Acharn: Is citta ayatana?

Alan: Yes.

Acharn: Is cetasika ayatana?

Alan: It is not inner ayatana.

Acharn: The difference between citta and cetasika: the innermost is citta. Sometimes there are conditions for (particular) cetasikas, sometimes not. But citta is always there.

Sarah: Alan, think of citta as the chief in experiencing. Like the king, surrounded by his ministers. There will be attendants running around.

Acharn: Is there Alan now?

Alan: Only when there is thinking. There is reality now and there is thinking now.

Acharn: what is Alan ?

Alan: Alan is a word that represents some characteristics of realities. Sound is not Alan, but it is real; it has a characteristic and we think of

a characteristic. Alan is just an idea conditioned by realities. If there is no sound, no idea of Alan. Alan is just a concept, the object of thinking.

Acharn: Not real, right?

Alan: right, not real.

Acharn: this is the beginning of understanding anattanness. The more there is understanding of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, there will be less and less clinging to the idea of self. And now, what reality is taken for Alan?

Alan: hardness, sound, what is seen. All realities are taken for Alan as they are experienced through the six doorways.

Acharn: Five khandhs. Who speaks now? Who is feeling now? No one.

Alan: Why is sañña one khandha?

Acharn: The Buddha spoke about the khandhas as objects of clinging, upadana khandhas. We cling to rupa, it is so very important in life. If there is no understanding of rupa there cannot be less clinging to rupa as me, as my eyes. Rup is known in a day, but not as no self. The Buddha taught that even rupa that is so dear is what arises and falls away. It appears not as it is because of the rapidity of the succession of rupas. It appears as something permanent, so pleasant to have. That is why it is very important to understand rupa as one khandha. Another khandha is feeling. Why do you want to have rupa? Because of different kinds of feeling. Feeling is very important in life. One actually clings to nothing: as soon as it is there it is gone, never to return. One clings to that which is not there any more. If there is no understanding of it, nothing can eradicate the clinging to rupa. The five khandhas are upadana khandhas, khandhas of clinging. Sañña is another khandha. It remembers the pleasant feeling that is wanted again and again, on and on. Sankhara khandha are cetasikas that condition different types of citta, kusala or akusala. So long as there is no understanding of the feeling which is there all day, it is impossible to get rid of the idea of self, or develop understanding of realities as not self. If there is no understanding of feeling when feeling is there, there is akusala, such as ignorance and also lobha, the second noble Truth (N: the cause of dukkha). What is there now?

Alan: It is already gone.

Nina.

2.66 Saturday discussion, IX, 5

nina

Sep 4 #164388

Dear friends,

Acharn: We are like in a dream, the whole life, until hearing the truth. Life is nothing, then something, and then nothing, all the time. The flux of bhavanga interrupts the different doorways, one by one, until death comes, any time, by conditions. Begin again, by conditions again, on and on. Only pañña is there to see that it is so worthless to be like this, without anyone at all. Only different realities, once in samsara (the cycle of birth and death). Never the same. Only different realities by conditions, to see that life is worthless, just arising and falling away all the time. (Understanding this) must be vipassana ñana of a high degree. To end life in samsara.

Nina: We forget that seeing the next moment is a different one.

Acharn: This is intellectual understanding, not yet direct understanding with direct awareness of one reality at a time, a different one. The Buddha taught the truth, to begin to consider. There is so much ignorance that hinders understanding the truth of what is there now: a very short moment of what appears and disappears. Different ones, never the same, in each life. Where is Lodewijk now?

Nina: We do not know.

Acharn: There is never Lodewijk again. Death is like now. Exactly the same. If there is no Nina, there must be no Lodewijk. No one at all, only different realities. This is the beginning to understand the truth.

Sarah: That is the world, just seeing and visible object that appear, no one there. There never was Lodewijk, even now. Like there is no Sarah, no Nina now. As Acharn said, if there is no understanding of rupa, how can there ever be less clinging to rupa, less clinging to the idea of my hand, my body, my eyesense, myself and other people. There are just different realities, just citta, cetasika and rupa.

Acharn: And now, what is the absolute truth? Is there the body or none at all? There is only thinking. When one thinks: “I am sitting here, this is my leg or hand”, but when nothing appears, is it there? There is nothing, only what appears at that very moment. As long as it is still there, it is the idea of self. There can be the clear understanding that it is not self. Later on there can be the moment of direct experience of the arising and falling away. Even now, it begins from hearing and considering.

There can be understanding of just one reality, no attention to another reality. When only one appears to pañña, pañña can penetrate the truth of that one, it can be known that there is nothing. It appears as nothing else, only that one. That is the meaning of appearing well, stage by stage. Pañña is not me, it is conditioned. It is not there all the time, only when there are the right conditions. One should not just “say” there is no me. Realities can appear as nothing, to right understanding which knows that it is not self.

The truth is what arises and appears and disappears. We do not mind whether that one has gone and this is the new one or the next one, different realities. So long as it is to be known as it is, as not self. This is the beginning. Right understanding penetrates on and on, until just one reality appears to one level of pañña, before higher understanding lets go of the idea of self. It conditions the experience of the arising and falling away. There will be more confidence in the truth.

Nina.

2.67 Saturday discussion X, 1

nina

Sep 7 #164418

Dear friends,

Nina: Acharn, you said that “when there is intellectual understanding, it does not know the arising and falling away of realities, but it knows the difference between intellectual understanding and direct un-

derstanding with awareness. This is the beginning.” It would be helpful if you could elaborate.

Acharn: Each word of the Buddha’s teachings should be studied very carefully, such as: reality appears well. There is seeing and that which is seen. We take seeing for self. Just seeing, does this reality appear well or not well? We are in darkness. Does any seeing appear well? There is no understanding of “no one, no thing”. So long as it appears as something, can we say that reality appears well?

Nina: Not yet.

Acharn: This is intellectual understanding. Reality now appears from moment to moment, but no understanding of it as it is. It takes a long time. Is there any understanding of what appears; it is nothing. Seeing is seeing, it just arises and falls away, there is no one there. Appearing well means, with understanding, stage by stage. There can be the understanding of the difference between intellectual understanding and direct understanding. At that moment the characteristic of sati appears. A characteristic such as hardness one has studied appears. Everyone knows that it is hard, but it is known as something. How can any characteristic appear well, it depends on understanding. Only understanding can eliminate the idea of self. When sammāsati (right mindfulness) arises there is a glimpse of understanding. Only for a moment. But we keep on thinking that we have arms and legs.

Citta is not cetasika. Each cetasika is different, like sañña now which remembers everything that is experienced. It is only a reality which remembers and “marks”. It cannot feel, like or dislike. Without considering who can see that there is no one at all. Just one moment, can there be anything or anyone? Seeing is not known clearly now. It is only an idea that it is what experiences, but at that moment there is no understanding of it. There can only be thinking, “It is not me”.

Only when it is the object of developed pañña, vipassana ñāṇa, realities appear as they are, as different ones. That what appears is not the experiencing or the thinking. Seeing is not hearing. At the moment of hearing, sound has to be there, nothing else. One begins to see that the world is lost. When there is a moment of experiencing there is the world. The world of sight, of sound, seeing or hearing. Nothing is there, no shape, no form, no idea.

Alan: had questions about the word suffering. Acharn had said that

when you understand the cause of suffering you have less suffering.

Alan: does this refer to the noble Truths? You said that the cause is not understanding realities as not self.

Sarah: If there is no understanding of what reality is, visible object as just that which is seen and seeing as no one, suffering and the cause of suffering cannot be understood. From the beginning you have to understand what dhamma is.

Alan: At a low level of understanding we can see in daily life that attachment conditions aversion. There will be less attachment just at the level of intellectual understanding.

Alan gave an example about unhappiness about the result of an examination.

Sarah: The cause of dukkha refers to the unsatisfactoriness of realities that arise and fall away. In your conventional example there is nothing about the understanding of dukkha, or about understanding of dhamma in the beginning. Dukkha is not just unpleasant feeling. Only understanding of conditioned realities will lead to less attachment. If there is no understanding of dhamma as anatta there will be no reduction of attachment. Attachment is still taken for “my attachment”.

Sukin: When thinking, “This is happening to me, it is my attachment”, attachment will not go away.

Sarah: Attachment is just a dhamma that arises and falls away, not my attachment that should be less. Less attachment for oneself, less suffering for oneself, this is more clinging. All this is the story about me, not understanding of dhamma. Lobha is so tricky, even if it seems that there is wise reflection.

Alan: It is what you follow all day long.

Sarah: There is still more attachment thinking in that way.

Sukin: Is there suffering at the moment of attachment?

Alan: There is, but it is not understood.

2.68 Saturday discussion X, 2

nina

Sep 8 #164430

Dear friends,

Acharn (to Alan): What feeling is there at the moment of attachment?

Alan: Pleasant feeling or indifferent feeling.

Acharn: No unpleasant feeling. The suffering of all conditioned realities is that they cannot last. How can what arises and falls away instantly be object of attachment? When there is no understanding of the arising and falling away of lobha, there must be lobha. One does not see the danger. There must be life on and on because of attachment to life. If there is no direct understanding of the arising and falling away (of realities), can anyone see them as suffering? They are not desirable. Because, actually, there is no one there. What is there: only the arising and falling away of realities, uncontrollable.

Sarah: They are unsatisfactory because of the arising and falling away, not being in anyone's control.

Jon: Not a refuge of any kind, of no intrinsic value.

Nina: Acharn spoke about the uselessness of life going on. . . We can only realize this when pañña is of the level of experiencing the arising and falling away of realities.

Sarah: There can even now be the beginning of considering that what we always hold so dear, visible object, sound, pleasant feeling, is gone completely. Even when there is not the direct understanding of the uselessness of visible object now, there can be the beginning of wise consideration. We love taste when we eat lunch, but each one is going immediately.

Nina: We can hear the words: gone immediately, but it is good to know that we do not really understand it.

Sarah: It does not matter. Understanding develops from wise consideration at this moment. If there never is wise consideration why realities now are unsatisfactory, understanding cannot develop.

One does not need to think: this is not direct understanding. That is more clinging to "my understanding".

Nina: It depends on the citta that thinks, maybe with clinging or without it. It is good to know that this is only intellectual understanding.

Sukin: this thinking is gone completely, never to arise again.

Nina.

2.69 Saturday discussion, X, 3

nina

Sep 9 #164438

Dear friends,

Alan: Can we understand kamma as a condition for seeing?

Sarah: By a higher stage of vipassana ñana, and now by reflection. Nobody can make seeing arise, it has its conditins. One begins to understand a little more what kamma is at this moment.

Acharn: As to your question about condition, paccaya, it does not mean that at the moment of seeing there can be the understanding of kamma, but the reality that is conditioned is there. There is no time to think about paccaya while there is the understanding of the reality of seeing. It appears; it is so clear that it is not anyone at all. From learning about paccaya before, it develops, (and) there can be the understanding of paccaya, even though that moment has gone. This can condition the understanding of anatta when reality appears as it is.

When there is seeing, only that which experiences is there to be known as not self. There is no time to think about paccaya, but all the paccayas we learnt about are there. Without conditions how can it (a reality) arise? There can be the understanding of conditions without any words, kamma or any other condition. That is why after vipassana ñana there must be pariñña (N: clear comprehension arising after the very short moments of vipassana ñana that has to consider further and apply what was learnt at the moment of vipassana ñana). What is experienced is not lost, sañña begins to remember the anattanness little by little. But since atta-sañña (wrong remembrance of self) has not been eradicated, it is there.

When there is more understanding of anattanness, there is understanding of paccayas without naming them. We cannot experience pac-

caya together with viññana, but right understanding that it is not me and that it is only conditioned(reality), is there. Parīñña applies in normal life whatever is experienced by conditions. When touching, there is no need to say what the condition is for touching. There is understanding of that characteristic that cannot be taken for “I”, because it is a moment of experiencing. When hardness is the object, it is known as not me. Usually there is an idea of the object that is experienced, such as table or chair. How can there be the understanding of no chair, no table, only a characteristic? “Only a characteristic” cannot be taken for anything, because it appears as anatta, but paccaya is there, it is there as it is.

Begin to understand that which is experienced as nothing in it, little by little. How else can what is experienced be understood as nothing, what was something before. Even now, while talking about citta and cetasikas, it is the understanding of conascence-condition(sahajata-paccaya). When we say that they must arise together, no one can separate them. When it is the object it is just one at a time. From intellectual understanding the understanding of that object as a reality begins.

Nina.

2.70 Saturday discussion X, 4

nina

Sep 10 #164446

Dear friends,

Acharn:

The understanding of conditions follow (awareness) but we do not have to name it or call it anything. Now we understand what is there: pakatupanissaya paccaya, natural decisive support-condition (N: which includes accumulated tendencies). When we use the term sahajata-paccaya, conascence-condition, we understand immediately that it refers to conascent dhammas. Can we separate visible object, sound or taste

from the four great Elements (N: arising in a group of rupas)? But without intellectual understanding it is impossible to let go even of the idea of something. It takes time to be truthful to the truth, to understand that there is no one in it, nothing in it. Even thinking about a reality is conditioned, even the moment of direct awareness is conditioned. Each moment is life or next life, each moment is momentary death (*khanika marana*). It never comes again. Completely gone, like death. Never being this person anymore.

Nina: As to understanding conditions without naming, you gave an example of *conascence-condition*, that is clear. But for *kamma*, this is more difficult, because *kamma* is in the past.

Acharn: Can anyone experience the object they like to experience? Is there always pleasant feeling? How come is there unpleasant feeling? That is the understanding of *kamma-paccaya*, but it is not the moment when there is direct awareness of feeling as conditioned. No one can condition feeling, that is the meaning of *paccaya*, condition. Seeing cannot be chosen, is that not *kamma-paccaya*? After seeing there is different thinking, different ideas, depending on accumulations, and that is not *kamma-paccaya*. *Pariyatti* (intellectual understanding) goes together with *patipatti*, direct understanding, all the time. It is not so that when a moment of direct awareness arises there is no more *pariyatti*. Developing direct awareness with understanding is not the moment of higher understanding.

Sukin: You spoke about the importance of *pariyatti* even when there is development of direct understanding. Does this mean that even for the *sotapanna* (who has attained the first stage of enlightenment) there has to be right consideration of the Dhamma further, intellectually?

Acharn: If we do not talk about *citta* and *cetasika*, can there be moments of thinking of them and moments of direct awareness by conditions? There is seeing all day but if we do not talk and think about it there will not be better understanding.

Sukin: Thinking and considering are very important.

Acharn: Even intellectual understanding is not enough to condition better, keener, higher understanding. For example, just a moment of seeing cannot be a direct object of *satipatthana*, because *sampaticchana-citta*, receiving-consciousness, and *santirana-citta*, investigating-consciousness, have to go on, but these do not appear. What appears are only seeing,

hearing or thinking. In order to know that they are different there must be the understanding what they are.

Just begin to see the characteristic which appears, there is nothing in it because it is very short. It must be through mind-door that it appears clearly. Through mind-door one at a time can be experienced, not together. That is the beginning of understanding of what we learnt from books: about doorways, processes, realities, understanding them as not self. Each reality appears just one at a time, that moment cannot be taken for “I”. This is not enough. Reality is so much deeper and more subtle. One begins to have more confidence.

Nina.

2.71 Saturday discussion X, 5

nina

Sep 11 #164451

Dear friends,

Acharn: I think I see you, but actually, there must be just a moment, followed by other moments which cannot see. It is so very quickly, no one can understand how it works. It is like the work of a magician how it happens like that, but citta is much quicker. The arising and falling away cannot be known, only the nimitta (the sign of it). There is the nimitta of rupa, feeling, sañña, citta. There are many cittas in a process having different functions.

Different cetāsikas arise with each citta and no one can make that (happen). There is now the reality which experiences an object. “I see”, but without what arises to see, what experiences an object, how can there be the idea of “I see”, or “I think”? All are different realities by conditions.

As to samanantara paccaya (N: immediacy-condition, the realities that succeed one another in a particular order), no one can make them arise in order. The paccaya of each citta conditions the paccaya of the next citta that succeeds it. The rebirth-consciousness has to follow the

dying-consciousness of last life. Seeing cannot arise after the dying-consciousness. What arises after the dying-consciousness is conditioned by kamma. The same kamma produces another moment to perform the function of bhavanga (life-continuum). That personality keeps on until death. Death can come any time, this moment or in the evening, or the next day.

Anantara paccaya (contiguity-condition, each citta is succeeded by the next one) and samanantara-paccaya (the succession in a particular order), the next citta has to arise after this citta and not another citta. No one can change this, because there is no one at all. There is no person, this means when there is the understanding of each reality as dhamma: as what can experience and as what cannot experience. It is conditioned to arise as just to be such. Nobody can change it and that is why all dhammas are anatta.

Maeve: about what cannot be understood intellectually.

Acharn: It is there already, by conditions. You think about what has not come yet. What is real is only now, what is conditioned. We think of other things too, by conditions. There is the accumulated condition (pakatupanissaya-paccaya (natural predominance-condition), that conditions even thinking.

This is the beginning to understand the truth of each moment which will be the condition for direct awareness as anatta. The moment of understanding is the moment of understanding the anattanness of whatever is there now.

There is hardness, and there may be awareness of it or just touching. The object does not appear well because it is so short and other objects arise and follow immediately throughout life when there is no understanding. Just like a dream from life to life. What about awakening, understanding that it is not "I", or just sleep as before? No one is there, it is only thinking. No matter there is a dream or not, there is thinking.

Nina.

2.72 Saturday discussion, XI, 1

nina

Sep 13 #164485

Dear friends,

Nina: Understanding can be classified by way of three levels: pariyatti or intellectual understanding, patipatti or direct understanding and pativedha or direct realization. Last time I heard that pariyatti is even necessary for enlightened people. This is a very good reminder. I look differently now at pariyatti. It is not ordinary intellectual understanding, not book knowledge, but it always refers to the present moment.

Acharn said that when we do not talk about seeing now there are no conditions to understand the reality of seeing. Acharn always refers to the present moment with many examples throughout all these sessions. We always have to understand the truth of what is there now. She gave very good examples about conditions, they are always related to the present moment. For example death, there is death at each moment, momentary death, *khanika marana*. We do not have to say: the present moment, but it can be understood more and more. This kind of understanding can condition later on direct understanding.

The simile of the magician I found very helpful. We look at something a magician handles, and where is that thing? It is not there anymore, it is nothing. He is so fast. But *citta* is even faster. There is something, then nothing and then something again, all within a very short moment.

Acharn: What is there now?

Nina: Mostly thinking.

Acharn: It is time to understand thinking. Whatever appears, appears usually to ignorance. There must be the understanding of the words of the Buddha so that we can talk about what is there. No one at all. Even seeing and what is seen. This can be a reminder. There can be understanding of that which experiences from birth. *Citta* arises and experiences all the time, but it is not known to anyone. What is seen now can be studied, there can be a beginning to understand it as

it is, little by little. Especially the reality which arises and experiences is not known. It arises and falls away in splitseconds.

No matter what is experienced, it must be always the nimitta (the sign) of reality. To learn the difference between namas one begins to understand: they cannot be the same and not at the same moment. Right understanding can begin to study until each moment is understood more and more. Then the reality can appear as it is, with anattanness. There is no expectation, no choice. From hearing and considering there can be a little understanding of that which appears, until it appears well, as it is, as not anything and not permanent. Little by little, from life to life.

It is not known how it is working now. All cetasikas are working, performing their function, until each one appears. So there can be more understanding from hearing and considering.

When, for example, anger arises, there is no one there. Anything which appears can be the object of considering in order to know that it cannot be taken for anyone or anything. Do you have legs, arms, face? Nothing. Only what appears is there. Each reality has gone. As soon as it has arisen it is gone. Nothing is left. What you take for something is that which is seen. The idea, the nimitta of something is there. What is seen can impinge on the eyebase and then fall away. The nimitta appears as something permanent.

Nobody can change what appears now, but right understanding can begin to understand what is so very deep, so very subtle. It is not easy to experience that, only highly developed pañña can. Pañña that developed from intellectual understanding that was sufficient to condition direct awareness, can just begin to understand the truth of a reality that appears as a reality. Not as “I” . Nothing can be taken for “I” . That is only thinking.

Nina

2.73 Saturday discussion XI, 2

nina

Sep 14 #164491

Dear friends,

Acharya: Just listen and pañña can arise unexpectedly, whatever level of pañña. From understanding intellectually, little by little, it can be a moment of direct understanding of a reality, by conditions. Just begin to understand the truth at any moment. One has heard a lot about the truth until it becomes one's (own) understanding.

Can you hear any sound now? Unexpectedly (and then) gone completely. Everything is like lightning, it is not known what it is yet. Whenever there is a question, "what is that", there must be "something". There is the "I" and "something". Thinking "what is that" is so natural.

Is there seeing right now? That which experiences has no shape, no form, no colour, no smell. Whenever it arises it sees. Seeing is the experience of that which has impinged on the eyebase and then it is gone. How can we take that for "I", it is gone completely. Life is a moment of experiencing an object. If there is no moment of experience there is no life. What appears now?

Azita: You said, "What appears now?" Outside there is the sound of a motorbike.

Acharya: Outside or inside, but now we are here, not outside. Where is that sound, outside or inside? What is outside? At the moment of hearing, where is it? Just a moment of hearing, nothing there, only sound and hearing. Where are they, not outside, not inside, nowhere.

Azita: I am reading from a note: "To see attachment is like seeing the space between groups of rupa, kalapas (N: rupas arise in groups and each group is surrounded by space), that is impossible.

Acharya: How many moments are there? A moment of seeing is not a moment of thinking. What is there in a moment? There is the nimitta (sign) of the reality of a moment. Reality is so very difficult to understand, its depth and subtlety.

Seeing just sees, many moments. It sees all the time, but the truth is not known, it is very subtle. It is gone, it just arises and falls away. There is nothing permanent, as "something" like table, chair, I or anyone.

Many things we take for "I", my throat, my shoulder. Where are they? It is only thinking. A very short moment (of experience) all the

time. Sound cannot be visible object. Can sound be my sound? Or the sound of a violin? It is nothing, just a moment.

What seems to be together, like seeing and hearing, can be separated by understanding little by little. They cannot be at the same moment and they cannot be the same reality. It is ignorance to take what is no more as “something”. Then there cannot be enlightenment of the truth (*ariya sacca*). It has to begin from intellectual understanding to condition direct awareness with understanding, not just direct awareness without understanding. Only intellectual understanding is not enough. It is so true that it can be proven, it can appear as it is. It cannot appear to ignorance, but it appears to *pañña* which is developed stage by stage. It is now, firmer and firmer and firmer, until there is no doubt about the truth of whatever appears, even if it is not directly known yet. One day *pañña* can begin with direct awareness, which is conditioned by intellectual understanding.

Nina.

2.74 Saturday discussion XI, 3

nina

Sep 15 #164497

Dear friends,

Acharn: One day *pañña* can begin with direct awareness, which is conditioned by intellectual understanding. That is the meaning of the perfections of patience, energy (*virīya*), determination, and truthfulness. Without these it is impossible to have such understanding, (that began) from not understanding at all, not hearing the word of the Buddha. That is why the more there is understanding of the truth, the more there will be confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha; it develops more and more, firmer and firmer, so that it will be known who the Buddha was. Who am I, how much ignorance; and (I am) beginning to understand, like the blind and the doctor who can cure the blind.

Azita: Why am I developing understanding? The perfections seem very far away.

Acharn: Without a moment, a moment, a moment, can we reach the goal?

Azita: I think not.

Acharn: Can it be possible, when it starts to go on little by little?

Azita: I have not much *khanti parami* (the perfection of patience), in fact none.

Acharn: The understanding of this moment is *parami*, perfection, to keep on going: listening, considering, understanding more and more, little by little. Otherwise one cannot be a *savaka* (a listener. N: three kinds of *Bodhisatta*: the person who will be the *Samma-sambuddha*, the Silent Buddha and the *Savaka*, listener, or follower). In the past there were many *savakas*. From not understanding one can become someone with understanding, little by little, depending on conditions. Not only in this life but in the course of many lives. The Buddha's *paramis* were accumulated not just in one life.

Sarah: Azita, if there were no patience, would there be any listening and considering the truth of life? One sees the value of it, more than just one's normal attachment. To listen, to see the value of it, to consider wisely, that takes a lot of *khanti*. (For example) when it is said that it is sound that is heard, not inside or outside. . . One does not have to try to have *khanti*.

As to the *kalapas*, *rupas* arise in groups. It is completely unknown, it is so subtle. It is there, separating each group of *rupas*. In a similar way, the attachment arising now after each moment of seeing, hearing, through each doorway, is very subtle, completely unknown. But it is there in between each moment of experience. The purpose is (knowing) how little is really understood, how great is attachment. More and more subtle kinds of attachment can be appreciated, that they are there, completely unknown.

Even now, during the Dhamma discussion, after seeing and hearing, attachment arises completely unknown, just like the space in between the *kalapas* (groups of *rupas*). If ignorance and attachment are not known, they can never be relinquished, even a little. It does take great *khanti* to consider, ask questions, reflect on what is said. It has nothing to do with conventional ideas about patience.

Nina.

2.75 Saturday discussion XI, 4

nina

Sep 16 #164515

Dear friends,

Acharn: Is there at this moment more understanding of what we are talking about, more than last time? It develops by itself, with sankhara khandha, no one at all. It (reality) appears to ignorance or to pañña which begins to know its characteristic. It cannot be changed to be someone, it has to be as it is. Just as natural as usual. How many times a day do you think about the teachings, even about one word. It is very rare. Even thinking is there, one knows, it is by conditions. How very little. That is the way it is. Because ignorance and all akusala have been accumulated from aeons and aeons. It takes a long time to be truthful. How much understanding is there of that which now appears to seeing, not as it is, until it is as it is. How much patience?

Tam: The paramis cannot be developed without understanding. At the moment of understanding the paramis are developed. In one of the Vietnamese discussions you spoke about someone who was very stingy but who could still attain enlightenment? Acharn: If there is no understanding of the nature of stinginess, as no one, no self, can there be enlightenment?

Tam: No.

Acharn: Like Angulima (N: who murdered many). The accumulation of pañña is there enough to condition the understanding of the truth at that moment. The asayanusaya (asaya is the accumulated kusala and akusala, and anusaya are the unwholesome latent tendencies) is the accumulation of kusala and akusala. So long as the anusaya is there, how can you eliminate (akusala) stage by stage. That is why we have to understand not only anusaya, latent tendencies, but also asaya. There is asaya as parami as well.

But the conditions are not right yet. No one can make it right to be a condition for such a moment of understanding. It is not known before when understanding and awareness will arise and what object they take.

When we are clinging to the idea of self there must be doubt and desire. There is natural life as usual, not self, only nama and rupa. One is relieved not to try or to rush to attain such knowledge.

Nina.

2.76 Saturday discussion XI, 5

nina

Sep 17 #164525

Dear friends,

Acharn: From hearing, considering, sincerity to that very moment (sacca, or truthfulness), how much understanding is there now? When direct awareness does not arise yet, there is doubt, and how can it be direct understanding? The understanding of no one, no self, can condition direct awareness, any time, anywhere. The understanding of anattanness begins to develop on and on and on. What is there must be by conditions. It is by conditions (for a reality) to be or not to be there.

Sarah: explains about patience: Whatever the accumulated tendencies at this moment there are, whatever ignorance or attachment is there, each one is conditioned. That is the way the paramis develop. Not (by) thinking: it should not be this or that.

It is a relief letting go of the burden. The development of understanding cannot be any other way. It is a relief not to think that it should be any different. That is the wrong Path of "I". Khanti (patience) which develops accepts whatever is conditioned.

When understanding is developed there is less clinging to "my akusala", "my tendencies". Whatever arises, no matter anger or attachment, it is the way it is. Accumulated tendencies are dhammas which are anatta.

Maeeve: speaks about conceit, mana, and mentions that reality arises unexpectedly. Is it possible that understanding can be a cure?

Acharn: When you all the time think of something, can anything arise because of anyone? (It arises) because of its own conditions. Like seeing, seeing does not belong to anyone at all, it is a reality which is conditioned by eyebase where only visible object can impinge on. Thinking about visible object, no matter we call it cup or anything which is seen, is a reality. Something appears at the moment of seeing and that object has to impinge on the eyebase. Otherwise how can there be a moment of such a reality to arise and experience what is there? Not the sound, not the hardness. Anything which arises depends on its proper conditions. Just being annoyed or very strong anger are different by conditions. There is no one, nothing, it has fallen away, never to return or to be found. There is the beginning to understand what is meant by *suññata* (emptiness): all completely gone. No one, no I, no thing.

The word *pakati* is also used, natural. Hardness is hard, it cannot be changed. It is a characteristic which is conditioned, just to be hard. Odour: just to be smelled, flavour: just to be tasted. All are *dhammas*. This is the beginning to understand that there is no one, no thing. It is just a relief. Just gone completely.

Before being born there was nothing. Then, from moment to moment, something, in the world, in one's life. And then: gone. One can be this personality only in this life. Then everything is gone, ended, at the moment of death. Then there is a new moment, a new being, a new personality. Then one goes to the end of such conditions to be this person. Very short, very temporary. There is a condition for birth and death on and on. So that *pañña* can see that there is no on there. Like the fire in the forest. From here to there, there is no one, that is the way life is. Gone completely. That is the meaning of *suññata*. The truth of *anatta* is *suññata*. They are the same.

Maeve: a question about falling away being a relief. The falling away of understanding seems a loss.

Acharn: There is only one moment. If there is no previous moment, can there be this moment? The previous moment conditions the arising of the next moment. What is there in the previous moment that is passed on to the next moment?. This moment now is conditioned by the previous moment. That is why one cannot change ideas one has accumulated. That is why we are all different. If there is no arising

there is no falling away. Each citta conditions the arising of the next one, there is no gap. From aeons ago there are conditions to be such personality, different from others.

Sarah: In the case of Angulimala, anger accumulated from life to life conditioned anger. In his last life it was completely eradicated. In the same way, understanding that is accumulated from life to life conditions understanding to arise when hearing the right words. Even though the previous moment of understanding had fallen away it could condition understanding in that life. Evenso for us, who are hearing, reflecting on the teachings and developing understanding, there is that tendency accumulated to make sense in this life time. Even though understanding falls away, never to return, there is still the tendency accumulated to condition arising in the future. When one is reborn as an animal, there is one's whole life no condition for understanding. But when one is reborn again as a human the understanding from past accumulations will condition understanding to arise again. It depends on so many conditions whether it will arise. Who knows whether the next moment will be anger, attachment or understanding. The tendency is there.

Nina.

2.77 Saturday discussion XI, 6

nina

Sep 18 #164532

Dear friends,

Alan: Where is the latent tendency? Attachment may be followed by aversion. Even when a moment is unwholesome, it has the latent tendency of wholesomeness in it.

Sarah: Even when citta with anger arises, the accumulated tendency of kindness is latent in the citta. For example, the citta with understanding now has still tendencies of anger, annoyance and attachment which are lying dormant. There may be understanding and instantly clinging to it as "my understanding". The tendency is there to condition un-

derstanding or wrong view at any time. Unwholesomeness is eradicated stage by stage. At the stage of the arahat all unwholesome tendencies are gone completely.

Nina: What is “appearing well” in Pali?

Acharn: What about now? What appears now as it is? If it does not appear as it is, it does not appear well. What is seen is like something, a table or a cup. The object does not appear well as it is. What appears in a process of cittas is together with the four Great Elements (in a group of rupas). In a kalapa (group of rupas) there are eight indivisible rupas (N: visible object is one of them). The four Great Elements cannot impinge on the eyebase. There is only one rupa that can be seen. It is what appears at the moment of seeing. When pañña sees it as it is, it “appears well” to pañña. Pañña understands it and penetrates the truth of it. Even when we do not use the Pali term, can we understand the way it is? What appears without pañña, does not appear well. In the Pali text it is stated that only nimitta can be the object of different vipassana ñanas. Only nibbana has no nimitta, nibbana does not arise. Whatever appears, appears as nimitta. When it appears well, it appears as a nimitta of reality.

The subtlety of reality is now at this moment when the truth is penetrated of what arises and falls away all the time. Even when we talk about the arising and falling away of reality right now, they are not known, when there is not direct understanding of any reality yet. The nimitta of a reality can be experienced, no matter it is visible object now. It is a very short moment of what impinges on the eyebase, there are many unknown moments. How can it appear well when there is no understanding of any moment yet? Hearing and understanding can condition a moment of direct awareness of a reality. It is by conditions. It shows its anattanness. Even now we cannot select a moment of seeing or hearing. At the moment it appears well no one can do anything, it is only by conditions. Direct awareness experiences an object more clearly than a moment without direct awareness. We begin to understand what is meant by “appearing well”, little by little. At the moment of talking about seeing now, seeing may not appear well. When there are conditions for the arising of direct awareness of a reality, there will be understanding of the difference between awareness with a moment of intellectual understanding and the moment of beginning to know what

is there as it is.

It is like talking about someone we have not met yet, but we know that person little by little, until the time comes that that person is there. Evenso we talk about visible object which appears but do not understand it as it is because there is no awareness yet. Only direct awareness begins to be aware of a characteristic. How many moments of seeing there are now that “see” someone or something.

Nina.

2.78 Saturday discussion XII, 1

nina

Sep 20 #164559

Dear friends,

XII, 1

Acharn: if we do not understand what is meant by enlightenment, it is useless to talk about being enlightened. What is enlightenment? Why does it take such a long time? Enlightenment is understanding the truth of what appears now. It does not appear as it is yet. Who can penetrate the truth which is so very deep? What we see is only the surface of what arises and falls away in split seconds. What appears is only the nimitta, the image of that which is there. But the truth of it is not yet understood, until we begin to understand what is the truth right now and what is meant by enlightenment. Can this moment be enlightened?

Nina: Understanding has to be developed, there were so many aeons of ignorance.

Acharn: It is not different from this moment. It depends on pañña how much understanding there is of that which is now appearing. It seems that so many things appear at once. That is impossible, each little rupa impinges on the eyebase and that can be seen. Not a picture or anything. Otherwise there must be “something” that is there all

the time. It is just a conditioned reality that arises and falls away in splitseconds. The words of the Buddha condition understanding of the truth of what is now. *Suññata* (emptiness) means: from nothing there is something and then nothing again, all the time. It is not just thinking or an idea, it is the absolute truth. It can be developed and become the object of enlightenment. Only *pañña* is the best of all conditioned realities.

Nina: before you came in we discussed “nothing, something, nothing”.

Acharn: When the arising and falling away of a reality has not been realized yet, there must be the idea of “I”, “someone” and “something” all the time. There are many levels of understanding. This moment is not the direct awareness of any reality, one at a time. Understanding will lead to the truth, little, by little, until the moment of enlightenment. But there must be precise understanding directly, now, of one object at a time.

Nina: Where comes in “nothing and something”?

Acharn: Before seeing is there seeing? Before hearing, is there hearing? Nothing. Until it is conditioned to be just that. You cannot change its characteristic, they are all *anatta*, no self. They just appear and disappear instantly, all the time. Now there are hundreds, thousands of realities unknown, different realities; not only one, many, many realities. We can only know one object at a time. Is this true?

Nina: Yes.

Acharn: When there is seeing, there is no sound.

Nina: We forget, we put them all together in daily life.

Acharn: *Dhamma* is each moment of experiencing an object, even there are conditions for more objects. But without the reality that can experience it, nothing can appear. It is this moment. It must be known as a reality that can experience it. The experiencing is not known as it is. We take it for “I” all the time: I see, I hear, I think. If it does not arise, where am I? When it is gone nothing can be taken for a permanent reality, such as the people around. How many leaves are there of a tree? Each one has to impinge on the eyebase. It cannot be experienced as shape, form, leaf or tree. Only that which can appear to the moment of seeing (is experienced). There is no idea of “things”. But we take it for something all the time. For example, what is that sound? There is

the idea of something in the sound. When sound is heard, it depends on thinking whether it is the sound of music or anything else. All the time there is something there, even though just sound is heard. We live in the magical world and citta is the magician.

Nina

2.79 Saturday discussion, xII, 2

nina

Sep 21 #164579

Dear friends,

Sarah referred to Wilhelm's questions about the Bodhisatta and the paramis and about the understanding of anatta.

Sarah: Acharn was stressing : it is just like now. The understanding of the truth is not anyone who penetrates it, it is just the understanding of realities. It is hearing about what dhamma is, what the truth is. There are different namas and rupas, and each one is anatta. This is the way understanding develops. It has to be the same way for the Bodhisatta and for us. It has to be hearing of the truth about realities as anatta, so that understanding can begin to develop.

It depends on conditions how much hearing there has to be before there is the wise considering and direct understanding of the truth.

Jon: Did the Bodhisatta hear Dhamma before he made a vow to become a Buddha in the future?

Acharn: When there is understanding is that Savaka Bodhisatta? (N: recap: a listener. There are three kinds of Bodhisatta: the person who will be the Samma-sambuddha, the Silent Buddha and the Savaka, listener, or follower). Bodhisatta is the enlightenment of the developed pañña, right understanding. There is no one.

Sarah: Now, when there is development of right understanding, we can say that we are savaka bodhisattas. There is bodhisatta and savaka bodhisatta. In each case there has to be development of understanding of the truth, gradually, from life to life, after we have heard the truth.

Now, at the moment of understanding, is it *savaka bodhisatta*? Beginning to develop understanding leading to enlightenment. What do you think, does it make sense?

Wilhelm: It makes a lot of sense. The *Bodhisatta* vow is a strong thing, the intention to become a Buddha. In Theravada it is the understanding of a continuation, there is some hope. It is so difficult, it takes aeons.

Sarah: It is just wishing to have paramis, or wishing to be a *bodhisatta*. Without understanding it is the wrong way, it leads to more clinging.

It is always back to this moment: understanding of the truth now. This naturally leads to the development of the paramis, such as determination or effort. It is not just wishing or trying to make a great resolution without understanding of reality at this moment.

Nina: As Sarah reminded me: it is still a story of myself thinking. Acharn often says: what about seeing now? What is reality now, do we understand it or do we confuse it with thinking about things? When I say, "It is difficult", it is thinking about my problem, or a story.

Sarah: It is the same when we think that we want more paramis, or would like to be a *Bodhisatta*, to be enlightened.

Sukin: Nina, the *Bodhisatta* did not think about becoming a Buddha. Only after the Buddha Dipankara predicted that he would become the next Buddha in the future.

Nina: It is the same with Sariputta who listened to Assaji. He had no idea he would become enlightened. It happened by conditions when he heard just a few words. It was because of former accumulation of understanding of the present moment.

Acharn: Why do you think about *bodhisatta*, not about understanding of what now appears? This is on the way to be a *bodhisatta*.

Sarah: We are always lost in the story of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, taking it (reality) for being something so important, forgetting about life in the world at this very moment: what is seen now, what is heard now. Dreaming about fantasies that are taken for realities. We think that if this problem is solved everything will be all right. But the accumulation of ignorance and clinging is there, so there is another story, problem or issue.

Nina: My washing, how to cope with it, something wrong with the computer. Always something coming up.

Sarah: That is life.

Nina: Acharn said that we think of all different objects but forget about citta now.

Sarah: Citta worrying about this and that, clinging to self, that is natural.

Nina.

2.80 Saturday discussion, XII, 3

nina

Sep 22 #164597

Dear friends,

Wilhelm: What does khandha mean? This term means a group.

Nina: As Acharn said: each citta is khandha, each rupa is khandha. It is translated as group, but we have to consider what this really means at this moment.

Acharn: Whatever arises, falls away, that is the meaning of khandha. It arises just once in samsara (the cycle of birth and death). Each conditioned reality must be khandha. We have to understand that rupa is rupa, nama is nama. The Buddha taught about upadana (clinging). (N: Upadana khandhas, the khandhas of clinging) We cling to rupa. It arises and falls away, and then no more. What arises falls away, each is khandha.

Rupa khandha: it is that which cannot experience. One clings very much in life to rupa that can be seen, heard, smelt, tasted or touched. When it is pleasant, it brings pleasant feeling. Pleasant feeling is desirable. There are rupa khandha, vedana khandha (feeling), sañña khandha (remembrance). We want what is remembered. Pañña and sati are sankhara khandha (N: all cetasikas except feeling and remembrance). Sankhara khandha arises with each moment of citta. We take it

for something by natural decisive support condition (N:pakatupanissaya paccaya. Because it has been accumulated).

All conditioned realities are khandha. It shows that there is no one, no permanent being. The translation (as group) can bring misunderstandings if one does not consider the Buddha's words carefully. If nothing arises can there be any khandha?

Nina: I find it so helpful that Acharn says that it is not the word that is essential, not the story or the theory, but the understanding of the reality now.

Sarah: Seeing the Buddha means understanding dhamma at this moment, not how much one is reading or in whose company one is in, be it the Buddha's, Acharn's or any one else's company. It comes back to the understanding at this very moment.

Wilhelm: asked a question about meditation centers. How to deal with these.

Jon: It is a test of one's own development of kusala and understanding how one deals with this situation. I do not find it a problem. I do not mind if others want to express their view, regardless right or wrong. If there is an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, good, otherwise it may not be the right occasion. There is no rule.

Sarah: It helps a lot not to have expectations.

Acharn: What is the goal or the point of meditation? What is meditation?

Sarah: It is a good point to ask other people to clarify their ideas, rather than saying: "I am not interested in meditation". Can there be meditation now? What is understood at this moment? What about this moment? Why is it beneficial to sit in a particular posture? When shopping, what about meditation?

Are we talking about bhavana (mental development)? Bhavana is the development of understanding, not following a practice.

Acharn: It is the word of truth to know what is wrong, what is right. Before hearing the teachings it is one's own consideration.

Sukin: You think that meditation is understanding the present moment?

Acharn: Can there be any meditation without understanding, (be it) samatha or vipassana? There are different degrees of understanding. What is meditation? Calming the mind or understanding whatever

appears now? What is best, “doing” or understanding? Life exists in a moment. Bhavana: development of tranquillity or understanding? Samatha was practised also before the Buddha’s enlightenment.

Development of right understanding of what appears now leads to more understanding of the truth of this moment. It is conditioned, otherwise it cannot arise. It arises and falls away in splitseconds. It is no more, very short.

Sarah: If there never is any wise consideration of what calmness is, what attachment, metta, kusala or akusala are, how can there be development of samatha? It has to begin with understanding, whether it is samatha or vipassana.

Acharn: Right understanding is the understanding of reality as it is. Without the understanding of calmness it is impossible to develop it. When there is right understanding it is calm. There is no need to try to have it. To what one clings in life almost every moment? To the five khandhas. Pañña can see what one clings to: to only what is hard, soft, colour, so many things, from life to life. What is the use of clinging to that?

Sukin: We do not cling only to colour or sound, but also to colour experienced yesterday. Is this an example to clinging to sañña khandha?

Acharn: After hearing the teachings one knows that one clings to all five khandhas. Before that pañña is not enough to understand sañña as not self. There is no idea of no self at the moment of developing tranquillity. No understanding. It is useless to develop calm, at the moment of understanding there is calm already with the understanding of the truth. In the Buddha’s time there were less people who had samatha and vipassana together than those who did not have samatha.

Nina.

2.81 Saturday discussion, XII, 4

nina

Sep 23 #164601

Dear friends,

Acharn: It is not easy to understand the truth of: there is no one, nothing. This is the first stage of enlightenment before arahatship, when there is not any more clinging. It has to be with understanding, otherwise there is “I” all the time.

At the moment of seeing is there your arm or leg? That which is not experienced arises and falls away all the time. Everything arises and falls away all the time. Sañña which marks and remembers is still there, so it is “I”, my arms, legs, eyes. Actually, reality is only seeing and what is seen. There will be the letting go of the idea of self. So long as all dhammas in a day are not known yet, there cannot be a stage of vipassana ñana of a high degree. There is nothing there when there is only a moment of seeing and visible object. Even understanding is not me. Understanding is there at the moment of considering carefully and beginning to understand little by little, but actually, there is no “I” at the moment of seeing. No “I”, how can there be arms and legs?

Nina: It is all true when we think intellectually.

Acharn: Intellectual understanding is a degree of understanding. The truth cannot be changed. There is nothing but seeing and that which is seen. There is only that in the world. At that moment there is not the world of space, of trees. It appears like it is, together, but the Buddha taught about many cittas in between, citta and cetasika. All are dhammas, there is no one there.

The aim of the study is understanding one day completely that there is no one, nothing, only different conditioned realities, uncontrollable, conditioned to arise and fall away instantly. This is the absolute truth, the ariyan sacca. The four noble Truths about all realities are: dukkha, the cause of dukkha, the ceasing of dukkha and the way leading to the ceasing of dukkha. Understanding these is like climbing a very high mountain to the top. The top is letting go. There is nothing in reality, only a moment of appearing and disappearing, unknown. It is known little by little, until the moment of enlightenment of the truth. The truth is penetrated which is now covered by ignorance and attachment. When there is less ignorance and attachment realities can appear little by little at the moment of satipaṭṭhāna. Paññā arises at that moment and knows that it is different from intellectual understanding.

From understanding just one word at a time there will be more understanding of the truth of what appears in a moment. Where is

Lodewijk? That person does not know you now, he has forgotten.

Sarah: You think of a dear one, no matter alive or not. There is thinking of the one who is there, thinking with attachment, sorrow or wise reflection.

Acharn: Even thinking is not you, just a moment of conditioned reality. Thinking about that person is conditioned. This is just daily life, each moment should be known, otherwise there is wrong understanding which always takes it for something, for “I” all the time.

To live alone is living with *pañña*, to understand that there is no one at all; only different realities, just at the moment they appear. Only when reality appears, otherwise it is gone. What we take for permanent is gone.

Sarah: association with the wise is the moment of wise reflection.

Nina

2.82 Saturday discussion XII, 5

nina

Sep 25 #164624

Dear friends,

XII, 5.

Sarah: Acharn’s comment (about a dear person who passed away) is opposite to what we usually hear. Usually clinging is encouraged to those who passed away. Ceremonies, rituals keep the memory alive. (There is an idea of) being together in heaven. They have completely forgotten us, they have their new life in another realm. The problem now is the clinging only. This is so helpful, so tough to hear, so precious.

Jonothan: Direct experience is meaningless without *pañña*.

Maeve: What is direct experience?

Jonothan: Direct experience of a reality. Only *pañña* can see the true nature of the presently arisen.

Sukin: I think that the problem is that one believes that after one has direct experience pañña will come. We think a lot of sati and direct experience but never about direct understanding. Actually it is all about understanding from the beginning to the end.

Acharn: Is there seeing right now? Many moments or only one? It is anatta, no one can make it arise. There are so many moments of seeing and also many moments of thinking and talking. There is no direct awareness of any reality yet. Without understanding it cannot be direct awareness. When there is intellectual understanding one begins to see the difference between sati with intellectual understanding which is not direct awareness yet (and direct awareness). Only when it arises there is no doubt what direct awareness is, because it is there with pañña. Even so short, it is there. Seeing is there, hearing is there, hardness is there. Just begin to be aware of the characteristic which is no leg, no tree. Only hardness (is known) as hardness. Pañña is so very weak in the beginning, it is only intellectual understanding. Lobha (attachment) is there after it very quickly. So long as there is lobha, the reality cannot appear well. Lobha can be less very slowly. Pañña begins to develop and it knows what moment there is direct awareness and what moment there is not. In the beginning sati is weak and pañña is also weak. It is a very short moment and not often enough to get used to the characteristic of the reality as not self. But at this moment of understanding it is developing, there is no one there.

Nina

2.83 Saturday discussion, XII, 6

nina

Sep 28 #164662

Dear friends,

Nina: This life is different from past life, but we cling to the idea of accumulation. We are not this person anymore after death but every

moment of understanding that is accumulated now can condition the arising of understanding in the future.

Acharn: Could we remember last life , who we were? Nina: No.

Sukin: When there is attachment with conceit, mana, not atta sañña(remembrance of self), what is it?

Acharn: When we talk about about atta sañña(remembrance of self) there is sañña of something.

Sarah: There can be sañña with lobha which is not clinging to wrong view, atta sañña.

Sukin: And that sañña is also remembering something or somebody?

Acharn: Sañña with ditthi(wrong view) leads to the wrong Path, to wrong understanding of self, different from common lobha. Taking whatever arises as something or someone. It is the opposite of understanding dhamma as anatta.

Jonothan: When recognizing, that is Nina, that is Alan, is that meant by atta sañña?

Sukin: No, atta must be wrong understanding.

Jonothan: So, it is a characteristic that is different from just recognizing objects.

Sarah: Sañña can be kusala or akusala, with wrong view or without.

Alan: Enlightenment is clear understanding of a reality as it is. It realizes the four noble Truths.

Sarah: It is the clear understanding of the four noble Truths, including the Truth of the unconditioned reality.

Alan: It is actually understanding the truth of life, why we are born, why we suffer. It is not just confined to the four noble Truths? That person understands the conditions for realities?

Sarah: If there is not understanding of reality even a little, there cannot be understanding of what appears well now. Without direct understanding of what appears now there can never be clear understanding of the four noble Truths at enlightenment. It has to develop.

There was a question about the Bodhisatta.

Sarah: There has to be hearing and considering what previous Buddhas taught about the four noble Truths. And that understanding has to be developed by a Bodhisatta. It is a beginning of conceptual right understanding leading to direct understanding and enlightenment. There

can never be enlightenment without the firm intellectual understanding in the beginning.

Acharn: Just learn about understanding of that which can be understood. There is seeing and if you try to understand something else, there cannot be the understanding of seeing as not self. The moment of what appears should be the object of understanding as it is, not self. We can learn when there is *atta ditthi* (wrong view of self). It is gone, no need to find out. What is appearing now?

When there is more understanding of that, it can bring about understanding of anything which appears through any doorway. When there is just thinking of what arises and falls away so rapidly, unknown, it cannot be the object of understanding. When there is something that should be an object of understanding, there is no one, nothing, no self at all. It is not just thinking or speculation. It is the moment of direct experience with right understanding. Depending on what level of understanding is there, by conditions. Otherwise it is wasting time instead of understanding.

Nina.

2.84 Saturday discussion, XIII, 3

nina

Sep 29 #164673

Dear friends,

Nothing can condition the arising of *sati*, except intellectual understanding which has developed enough. So you know why *samma-sati* does not arise and why it arises by conditions. There will be more confidence in the truth that can be realized. Many people in the Buddha's time had enlightened this truth, depending on *pañña* only, not on wishing or speculating. The truth appears only to *pañña*. At that moment nothing is there, only that which appears as object. There is nothing left after it has arisen and fallen away.

Seeing is seeing, do not take it for “I see”, little by little. In a day there are uncountable moments of seeing. What about hearing and thinking, they are not known. Ignorance is there with attachment. Only when there is direct awareness realities begin to appear, until there is no self; nothing in it, because it is gone, *suññata*. If it still like now, seeing for many moments, that cannot be *suññata*. The truth of *anatta* begins very slowly, little by little, at the moment of direct awareness of a reality. Otherwise it is (only) intellectual understanding that there is no “I”. In a moment there can be just an object and that which experiences it. No world of people and things, sun and moon, gone, lost. Only one object appears well and that means: nothing is there. That is the beginning of understanding of what is meant by *loka*, world, different from *lokuttara*. Each word is in conformity of the truth, of reality, naturally, by conditions. Deeper and deeper; it can be known and understood when it is there.

There will be more understanding of anything, not trying to control it or stop it, or wishing to have it or not have it. *Lobha* has to be known as it is, as the second noble Truth. That is why there are twelve rounds: *pariyatti* (intellectual understanding) of each of the four noble Truths, *paipatti* (direct understanding of them) and *paivedha* (direct realization) of them.

Nina.

2.85 Saturday discussion, XIII, 4

nina

Sep 30 #164683

Dear friends,

Acharn: There is *atta sañña* (wrong remembrance of self) when there is (the idea of) “I hear, I think, I understand”. Even not in words, but it is there. Why do we speak about the truth of each reality? Just to understand *anattaness*, to understand that no one is there. We begin to listen and to carefully consider the truth so that there can be moments

of understanding little by little. But it is still “I” until the arising of vipassana ñana. It is the beginning of anatta sañña because the object does not appear as it used to, as “something”. We think about cup or hand. When it appears as hand, it does not appear well, not as the truth; it is there (many things) together, taken for something as a hand. When any reality appears there is nothing in it, there is no idea about it. Hardness is hardness as usual, but what is the difference? There is no understanding of each reality that appears now, it is not understood as anatta or suññata. It is gone all the time.

When there is more understanding of the truth of it, it conditions moments of direct awareness and this must be with pañña. (There is) understanding of that object as we heard about it before, otherwise it cannot appear well and it cannot be pañña which experiences it as it is, as no one. When we think about the words “no one” when it does not appear yet, we cannot imagine how that could be. Without pañña it does not appear well, because there is still “something” there. Without pañña there is doubt. Wrong understanding takes it for “I have experienced that”. There is no pañña, there is still “I”. It is very deeply rooted, from life to life. The truth is sacca parami, understanding what is right and what is wrong. Lobha is there, unknown. Even when (the object) is not known as something it still clings to what appears.

Sarah: The anatta sañña that accumulates together with right understanding is very important. It is the opposite of atta-sañña like now, remembering as something or someone all the time, with wrong understanding.

Nina.

2.86 Saturday discussion XIII, 5

nina

Oct 1 #164703

Dear friends,

Sarah: strong *sañña* (*tira sañña*) is a condition for right awareness of realities. Through firm remembrance what is the right object there will be more familiarity with the object of right understanding: the sound that is heard, just visible object that is seen. One will be used more and more to the right object, and that is why we have these discussions. It becomes a protection against the wrong understanding, *atta sañña*, taking those realities for something or someone. Without the accumulation of right understanding and right remembrance of the right object there could not be direct understanding of realities as *anatta*.

Nina: Acharn mentioned *suññata*, she was stressing the arising and falling away of realities.

Acharn: When *pañña* is highly developed (it is understood that) nobody can change any reality and *pañña* can understand deeper and deeper. Vipassana *ñāna* is the understanding of the degree that it can penetrate the truth that is hidden. As to “appearing well”, this is of different levels. When there is no direct awareness, nothing appears. When there is direct awareness it knows only one reality as object. This is not enough, until *pañña* develops higher and higher, stronger and stronger. At the moment of understanding *anatta* and *suññata*, nothing is there. Otherwise there must be clinging to whatever appears. It is quite a release, being away from *lobha*.

Sukin: Understanding is so weak, followed by attachment as usual, a lot of *akusala*.

Acharn: It is better to know the truth. The Path leading to enlightenment, to know the truth must be *pañña* together with other conditions.

Nina: Is very deep Dhamma not too difficult for a beginner?

Alberto reminded me: It is difficult but important to start with the right reminders. Even a little of right intellectual understanding is very valuable.

Nina: I find it very good not to be afraid to explain deep Dhamma to the very beginner.

Sarah: Even when it is rejected and not appreciated one never knows when the right words will bring fruits later.

Nina.

2.87 Saturday discussio XIV, 1

nina

Oct 4 #164747

Dear friends,

The subjects discussed: Upanissaya gocara: the object of understanding. Arakkha gocara: the object that protects from akusala. Up-anibhanda gocara: the object that is unbinding, letting go.

Gocara means object. Upanissaya: nissaya is foundation or base and upanissaya is a strong base. Upanissaya is the object of understanding. Arakkha means protection, in this case protection from akusala. Up-anibhanda: nibhanda is not binding, detachment.

Acharn: What appears now is the nimitta (sign) of different things and that cannot be the upanissaya gocara. But when one understands the truth that will be upanissaya gocara. It is the object the Sammāsambuddha understood, not self, not anything. The truth of it begins to show up to different levels of pañña.

When there is no understanding of the object we take it for glass or table. At the moment of seeing there is nothing. But now it is Sarah, not nothing yet. The object does not appear clearly. When the understanding of anattā has become firmer and firmer it conditions more kusala.

The object of understanding protects from the wrong method, having the wrong object, as a thing I can control. It is not understanding of the reality that appears. One may try to get rid of lobha instead of understanding it as not self. Does anyone sees a change in life when there is the understanding of dhamma as anattā? Even understanding a little is a change from ignorance to beginning to understand. The object is the same as before, but one sees that there is nothing to cling to as much as before. The attitude changes. What one clings to is nothing, it is all completely gone. There can be a change of attitude towards that object, even a little and not often. It can bring the change in life from ignorance to pañña. One sees: the most valuable moment is the moment of kusala and pañña.

One has an idea of my hand, my leg, my friend, which are always

there, but they are no more, completely gone. Is there any expectation? Then there is no understanding of anattā.

Sarah: When one considers sound just for an instant, it is gone, never to return. This is life at this moment. Gocara is the object of wise consideration. This is the way understanding accumulates.

Acharn: When there is understanding, there is no one; there are different realities appearing, one at a time. Hardness cannot be my leg, my arm, table or chair, only that which is hard. It cannot be anyone, it is conditioned to arise and then it falls away. That is the object of understanding, to be upanissaya gocara. We should know not only the word, but understand the reality of it. It develops little by little, also intellectual understanding develops little by little.

Nina: You said that there can be a little change in attitude when it is realized that each reality is gone, nothing left. I think that it is just for a moment. Next moment we cling again.

Acharn: Arakkha gocara is the object that protects from akusala. But there is attachment as before. That is the way to see that understanding develops gradually. There is no expectation.

Is there any arakkha gocara? Right understanding is not strong enough, it depends on conditions. That is the way to have firmer understanding as not self. There is no hurry, impossible to hasten understanding of the object right now, as it is. At the moment of understanding there is protection from akusala moments.

How many moments of arakkha gocara are there in a day? It depends on how strong the understanding of upanissaya gocara is.

Nina.

2.88 Saturday discussion, XIV, 2

nina

Oct 5 #164771

Dear friends,

Sarah: One should understand arakkha gocara as not self, and not try to do something, following wrong view and wrong practice, or taking attachment and anger for one's own attachment and anger. If there is no development of pariyatti the dhamma that appears now cannot be a protection against wrong view and other strong akusala.

Acharn: When there is no understanding of the object we take it for a glass or a table all the time. There is no understanding that at the moment of seeing there is nothing. Now it is Sarah, not nothing yet.

When the understanding of anattā becomes firmer and firmer, it conditions more kusala.

The paramis are developed with understanding. There can be understanding at the moment of giving, with the idea that everyone is the same, sometimes pleasant and happy, sometimes unpleasant, everyone is just the same, as dhamma, no one there. It is upanissaya gocara that can protect at the moment of kusala.

What can protect one from having akusala? It has to be the understanding of the level of upanissaya gocara, little by little, until it conditions kusala as a parami, to protect from akusala, until it can be upanibandha gocara. If upanissaya gocara is not sufficient, it needs the paramis and understanding of the truth of gocara as no one, no self. Without understanding there cannot be arakkha gocara nor upanibandha gocara. There can be dāna and sīla without understanding.

There cannot be paramis without upanissaya gocara. Upanissaya gocara conditions arakkha gocara. There can be conditions for direct awareness. One talks about sati, but where is the understanding of its nature? No one can condition awareness to understand what is there deeply down there, so very deep; it needs many conditions. Upanissaya gocara is there, otherwise there can never be upanibandha, but before that arakkha gocara is needed. There is so much akusala, how could there be upanibandha?

Sarah: Sound is heard, it depends on upanissaya gocara whether it is object of understanding or of ignorance and attachment.

Acharn: Even this understanding cannot arise without upanissaya gocara. It depends whether it is of a slight degree or firmer, only sati of the level of satipaṭṭhāna can know. It is the nimitta of reality, not "I" anymore. Reality has to be understood more and more clearly in order to have less attachment to the idea of self. Asavas (intoxicants) arise,

even while talking. Only paññā can begin to eliminate them. Without direct awareness reality cannot appear well.

Nina.

2.89 Saturday discussion, XIV, 3

nina

Oct 6 #164779

Dear friends,

Acharn: The development is very difficult because it has to be so natural, there has to be understanding what is there: wrong view, attachment? Paññā has to understand the five khandhas as no one, to be upanissaya gocara. They are all anattā. When they show up as anattā it is the way of having less attachment.

Sarah: Seeing, hearing, just dhammas arising by conditions.

Nina: It is so good that Acharn reminds us all the time of the intoxicants, āsavas, arising after a moment of seeing or hearing, by conditions.

Alan: Sarah, can you explain the words upanissaya gocara and arakkha gocara?

Sarah: Gocara means object, what is experienced, another word for ārammaṇa. In the context of upanissaya gocara, it refers to the object that can be object of understanding, the object that can only be explained by the Buddha. Visible object is usually object of ignorance and attachment. But when one has heard the Dhamma, it can be object of understanding, upanissaya gocara. Nissaya means support and upa is strong or decisive. It is the object which is the strong support for understanding at that moment. It refers to pariyatti understanding. We can hear the word seeing and it can be meaningless. There is ignorance, not upanissaya gocara. Only at the moment of understanding it is upanissaya gocara. This is understanding that has to accumulate; we can become more familiar with those realities so that understanding will become a protection from wrong view and other akusala and lead to the three gocaras (upanissaya gocara, arakkha gocara and upanibandha go-

cara) which have to be supported by the paramis, the perfections. The paramis are a protection that develops with understanding. Understanding, no matter intellectual understanding or direct understanding, has to accumulate in this way.

Acharn: The object is not far away, it depends on understanding. The absolute truth is no one, no self. It is very hard to experience it as it is. Since there is a great amount of ignorance for years and years and attachment, the great master, how can there be moments of understanding of the truth? It has to develop little by little, from moment to moment, with the paramis of viriya(energy or effort), sacca (truthfulness), khanti (patience) and adhihāna (determination). No one can do anything, it is not in anyone's control, but paññā is there.

Nina

2.90 Saturday discussion XIV, 4

nina

Oct 7 #164789

Dear friends,

If there is not enough understanding (of all realities that appear) it is impossible to get rid of the idea of self, even reality appears well to vipassanā ñāna, vipassanā ñāna cannot let go of the whole idea of "I". There are different levels of khanti, patience, and vipassanā ñāna is the beginning of khanti. When vipassanā ñāna is strong, it experiences all objects in daily life; there is no choice. It depends on conditions only. The anattanness shows itself more and more; all are dhammas, not self.

As to the expression "appearing well", no one can imagine how well it is. Seeing with ignorance and seeing with understanding must be quite different. Reality appears well to different levels of paññā. Everything has to be known perfectly, completely, in order to eradicate the idea of "I". Seeing cannot be taken for "I", he, she. It is only a reality which arises just to see, and then it is gone. At the moment of thinking, saññā remembers and marks the object and vitakka (think-

ing) touches the object. The ten cittas (five pairs of sense-cognitions, seeing etc.) do not have vitakka. The other cittas need more than seven cetasikas (the universals) by conditions. This is the beginning of developing understanding of the second vipassanā ñāṇa (direct understanding of conditions).

Paññā can begin to develop when there is firm confidence of the truth, until it is upanibandha gocara, direct understanding of the truth of no one. Everything is gone, it is no more.

Nina.

2.91 Saturday discussion XIV, 5

nina

Oct 8 #164797

Dear friends,

Acharn: The absolute truth of any reality does not show up yet so long as there is only intellectual understanding, but this will lead to direct awareness little by little. It is not enough in the beginning, it takes a long time. There should be no expectation, it depends on conditions. This indicates that paññā becomes stronger little by little, to letting go wanting, clinging to what has not come yet, until it arises unexpectedly. Nobody can do anything; there are only realities, absolute realities by conditions. That is letting go, little by little, from the very beginning. The understanding of anattā becomes firmer little by little. The clearer appearance is upanissaya gocara and upanibandha gocara with arakkha gocara.

Sarah: Even when upanissaya gocara is weak, it is known that it is upanissaya gocara, no matter what words we use.

Nina: It is only visible object, it is only sound, but it is not yet upanissaya gocara.

Sarah: It is just sound that is heard now. Are we just repeating the words or is there some understanding, even at the beginning? If there is no understanding I do not think we would be here at all. There would be

no point in hearing and considering more. There must be understanding that it is the truth taught by the Buddha and that it is correct, that it leads to more understanding. That is *upanissaya gocara*. Even from the beginning patience (*khanti*) develops with understanding and leads to less expectation about it whether understanding will be weak or strong and there will be more contentment. That is the benefit of *upanissaya gocara*. More contentment with whatever is conditioned at this moment.

Nina: We do not try to change anything.

Sarah: That is a real hindrance. It does not matter what reality arises, but it is a hindrance if one tries to change it, tries to select an object.

Acharn: Is there *khanti* now?

Nina: A little.

Acharn: It is not the word. It is understanding the difficulty of experiencing the truth. Develop it against the current of *akusala*. The *parami* of *khanti* together with the *parami* of *viriya*. Listen and listen, consider and consider, not “I”.

Sarah: That is a very good example of *arakkha gocara*. How the right intellectual understanding leads to the development of the *paramis* such as *khanti*. These are the protection from following the wrong way, selecting an object, from strong *akusala*. Understanding has to develop with *khanti parami* from the very beginning.

Acharn: Are you afraid of *akusala*?

Nina: It has to be known, that is the only task.

Acharn: When *paññā* is there, there is no fear.

Question: *Arakkha gocara* is conditioned by *upanissaya gocara*?

Acharn: *Gocara* is the object when there is a moment of *paññā*. It knows what is *upanissaya gocara*. *Paññā* knows that it is nothing, just a moment that is conditioned, no “I”. It protects from clinging to it, from wanting to have *kusala*. It depends on conditions.

When the conditions for *akusala* are so strong, no one can stop conditioning more and more *akusala*. It depends on the arising of *upanissaya gocara* to protect until there can be conditions for direct awareness to begin to understand even *akusala* at that moment. No matter how strong *akusala* is and how long there is *akusala*, there are still conditions for the arising of *upanibandha gocara*. There is no choice, no one can

do anything. Whatever the level of accumulated understanding is, no matter it is strong or not, paññā can understand it as no one, no self.

Nina.

2.92 Saturday discussion, XIV, 6

nina

Oct 9 #164810

Dear friends,

Acharn: Even at the beginning of upanibandha gocara paññā is so weak, compared to the accumulation of akusala. There are ten perfections, paramis, and it depends on conditions at what moment a particular parami arises. Why is there dāna? Usually people do not give, but what conditions the moment of giving? With or without paññā? Not everyone understands the moment of giving as not self, because there is no upanissaya gocara. But when upanissaya gocara is there, it is strong enough to condition the arising of kusala more than akusala. When there are moments of akusala in one's life all day, can there be moments of upanibandha gocara? When there is not upacaya gocara nothing can protect from akusala. Even when there are many moments of kusala in a day, it depends on upacaya gocara whether it is enough to understand that object as not self. One has to see the danger of akusala, otherwise there are conditions for akusala all day. When there is akusala there is no arakkha gocara. But when it is there based on the understanding of not self, it can condition any level of kusala, until the moment of upanibandha gocara.

We can understand what moment there is satipaṭṭhāna and what moment there is not, but is this enough to condition the moment of upanibandha? Without the paramis? Can anyone condition direct awareness with understanding when one is all day full of akusala? One does not think about the paramis but one thinks just about direct understanding, and this is impossible.

One can have understanding of one's great amount of akusala, it is there now. What can condition upanibandha? Study, hearing and considering the teachings is the way leading to understanding. It depends on one's accumulations to understand clearly or roughly, to understand very little or to understand keenly. It depends on conditions which have to be also the protection from all akusala, from conceit, wrong view, stinginess, and aversion. Those who have strong wrong view do not listen to the teachings.

Sarah: No one can overestimate arakkha gocara, protection. It is much greater than we think. There have to be much more khanti parami, viriya parami, all the different paramis.

Acharn: One should see the danger of akusala and the benefit of kusala. The best is pañña that understands the truth.

Nina.

2.93 Saturday dsicussion XV, 1

nina

Oct 19 #164946

Dear friends,

There are ten instances of talk, done by the good friend in Dhamma, dasa (ten) kathavatthuni (footnote 12 in Visuddhimagga I, 49) :On wanting little, contentment, seclusion, aloofness from contact, strenuousness, virtue, concentration, understanding, deliverance, knowledge and vision of deliverance (M i, 145, and III, 113).

The discussion was mainly on contentement and here it became clear that it pertains to the citta with understanding at this moment.

Then follows the transcription by Alberto:

Nina: I have a question about satipaïhāna and thinking about realities. You often reminded us that the difference should be known between the moment there is sati and the moment there is not.

Acharn: What is the object of satipaïhāna? When there is no understanding of this moment as it is there is no condition for satipaïhāna.

We learn from the very beginning, at the level of pariyatti, that there is seeing and that which is seen. At that moment no other object can appear. That which is seen cannot be anyone. It impinged on the eye-base. We think that we see many things, but only one reality impinges on the eyebase.

Nāma arises just to experience an object. It does not appear like that yet, even it is there all day. There cannot be any moment without that which arises and experiences, for a living person who has not died yet. It is there but it cannot be easily known. Actually at this moment of seeing it is there. It experiences what appears. This will lead to satipaṭṭhana. Without understanding this it would be impossible. The understanding of no self has to be firm enough.

If we had not read about the processes of citta it seems that there is nothing in between seeing and hearing. What can be known is what appears. We cannot know the cittas before and after seeing. From knowing this there is a little letting go of misunderstanding of whatever is now appearing.

The beginning is very little at a time before there can be direct awareness of realities by itself, unexpectedly. It has not arisen before. No one can choose the time, the place, the object for it to arise. This indicates the anattanness of everything.

Hearing that there is no one, nothing at all, and considering condition a moment of direct awareness. Paññā may not be keen enough to understand (realities) directly. It is just the time of developing understanding of what is there by conditions. Conditions to let go of the idea of self. No one can do anything.

When paññā is keen enough, it does not matter whether or not there is direct awareness.

Nina.

2.94 Saturday discussion XV, 2

nina

Oct 20 #164958

Dear friends,

Acharn: If there is not direct awareness, also that is "not me". One may think: "I feel sad if there is no direct awareness today, how long will I be", but it does not matter. Sāriputta could directly understand the truth (when he listened to Assaji) because of the (accumulated) paññā. It was sufficient to let go of clinging to the idea of self.

Sarah: That is the whole point. Sound that is heard now is just sound. It just depends on conditions whether understanding now is intellectual understanding or direct understanding. It is anattā and it does not matter. It is conditioned.

Sukin: Why satipaṭṭhāna and not samādhi-paṭṭhāna or viriya-paṭṭhāna?

Acharn: Right awareness is just a moment, different from what you take for sati in different languages. Not forgetting to understand this moment. There is, for example, hardness now, it is touched. When there is no hearing about the truth, one does not know that there is nothing, only hardness which is the object which is there as the object of touching. One has no idea about this when there is no understanding of it.

But when there is understanding from hearing, considering, (understanding) is not there all the time, only some time when there are conditions for it to arise. We do not know how long it (understanding) has been developed. The moment it arises it means that there must be conditions to understand that with direct awareness of that object.

It seems that when we think (of an object) we follow (that object). When we think of that which is seen, thinking follows that which is seen, it does not follow other things. After seeing it thinks and follows it closer and closer, to be sati, but in truth it is there together, in the same way as seeing and hearing which seem to be together.

When sammā-sati is there it seems it is there at the same time as the experiencing of that object, but in reality they arise in different processes. Even now, how many processes (of cittas arising and falling away), and how many processes there are in between seeing and hearing, they seem together.

So, this is just the way to understand and let go. Leave it to sankhāra khandha (the conditioned cetasikas apart from feeling and remembrance

and including *sobhana cetasikas*) and *dhammas*. It is not the (right) way to think, “I can do, I can try”.

There is seeing now, why is there not direct awareness? Because there is not enough understanding as no one, no self. There is attachment, unknown as *āsava*.

Nina: It is very helpful that you always say again and again: There is no one who can do anything. A very good reminder.

Acharn: Without hearing and considering there cannot be food for *paññā* to develop. That is why we listen and listen and listen, and there is understanding little by little, until there can be conditions for direct awareness, unknown, unexpectedly, as *anattā*. It shows the *anattaness* of more understanding as no self, no one, little by little, from moment to moment.

Nina.

2.95 Saturday discussion XV, 3

nina

Oct 22 #164984

Dear friends,

Sarah: It is a trap of *lobha* when there is clinging to the idea that there should be more understanding, instead of being content with whatever understanding there is now or with whatever appears now. When one does not see the trap of *lobha*, there is clinging and trying to find another way (of development). That is a hindrance to the development of *satipaṭṭhāna*. It can come in any time. The contentment with whatever appears now and the development of understanding of reality now is very important. It is the opposite of trying to do, to find a way to have more understanding.

Ann: We heard definitions but did not understand what appears now.

Sarah: It is attachment to wanting it to be different from this moment.

Acharn: Even at each level of vipassanā ñāṇa there is (the understanding of) “no one”. The truth of impermanence, dukkha and anattā can be known clearly. Understanding knows little by little that there is “no me”. The clinging to the wrong view of self is the first to be eradicated and in the beginning other forms of attachment are not eradicated. Even the “non-returner”, the anāgāmi, (who has attained the third stage of enlightenment) has different levels of attachment. They have to be known, otherwise they cannot be eradicated.

When there is not yet the paññā of the sotāpanna (who has attained the first stage of enlightenment), the very subtle lobha cannot be known. After developing more understanding of no self, the idea of self becomes less until the magga-citta (path-consciousness) of the sotāpanna arises and the idea of self is eradicated forever, absolutely. But there is still lobha; lobha is attached to everything except lokuttara dhammas (N: Nibbāna and the lokuttara cittas that experience it).

Also in the development of insight, after vipassanā ñāṇa has fallen away there can be lobha. It has to be known, otherwise it cannot be eradicated.

Tam: You just mentioned that subtle lobha has to be known. What about people who develop samatha? They have to know very subtle lobha?

Acharn: What is anattā?

Tam: All dhammas. So they know subtle lobha but not anattā, right?

Acharn: When there is understanding at the level of the sotāpanna, there is no more lobha that takes realities for “I” or something permanent, but there is lobha for other things.

Sukin: The sotāpanna understands the āsavas, but those who develop samatha can never understand āsavas.

Ann: The sotāpanna has no more the āsava of wrong view.

Sarah: The āsava of wrong view, diṭṭhāśava, no longer arises for the sotāpanna. Subtle attachment to sense objects (kā māśava), to becoming (bhavāśava), and ignorance (avijjāśava) are most of the time unknown. They are only eradicated by the arahat. It is still a long way to go before these are eradicated.

Acharn: Is this kathavattu we are talking about?

Sarah: When one is understanding more the danger of different degrees of attachment and seeing the value of understanding, there is more contentment. So, it is *kathavattu*. Upanissaya gocara understands different realities now, what appears now, sound that is heard now. Without hearing about different realities and about the development of upanissaya gocara, there can never be understanding of those realities. That is why we discuss.

Acharn: Is there upanibandha gocara now? There is no understanding of it. It has to be the beginning. If it is not the beginning, how can it grow? So, it is there as beginning. When you do not have akusala as before it is arakkha gocara (protection), so that it protects against lack of direct awareness and there is direct awareness.

Sukin: Do you think there is arakkha gocara when there is not *satipañhāna*?

Acharn: Yes, there cannot be always *satipañhāna*. There are different levels of kusala. There are moments of direct awareness and moments of kusala without it. If there is no direct awareness, how can there be conditions for direct awareness?

Sarah: Here the contentment and the development of all perfections (*paramis*) comes in, conditioned by understanding. They have to support and nurture that understanding to condition direct understanding and its development.

Acharn: Is there “you” now? The understanding that there is “no me” can little by little condition moments of direct awareness.

Sukin: (That is) when firm intellectual understanding of “no me” is already a protection?

Acharn: Any moment of kusala is arakkha to be kusala, not to be akusala.

Nina.

2.96 Saturday discussion XVI, 2

nina

Oct 26 #165042

Dear friends,

Sarah: As understanding develops, khanti, patience, develops with it. Understanding becomes firmer and firmer, one knows that it (khanti) is conditioned. It cannot be any other way. Without that understanding it can never develop.

Acharn: So now is there viriya or khanti? No need (to know) so long as there is no understanding of *nāma* which experiences and *rūpa* which does not experiences anything. Otherwise the self is there. The point of talking about viriya and khanti is that nothing can be taken for self. It appears as “something” all the time.

Azita: Among the four *āsava*s (intoxicants) which are *kāmasava* (the *āsava* of clinging to sense objects), the *āsava* of clinging to existence (*bhavāsava*), the *āsava* of wrong view (*diññāsava*) and the *āsava* of ignorance (*avijjāsava*), *kāmasava* arises more often.

Acharn: When there is nothing, there is no world. Can there be the world, even there are *citta*, *cetasika* and *rūpa*? It is imposible to stop the way it is. There must be the reality which cannot understand anything. When nothing appears and then just one reality, who knows there is attachment to that reality already, because of ignorance. Attachment to a very tiny piece of *rūpa* and that is *kāmasava*.

Nina: I do not understand *bhavāsava*, the *āsava* of existence or becoming.

Acharn: Is there you? That is *bhava*, being. “I” see, “I” think. *Āsava* arises because there is still the latent tendency, *anusaya*. It is unknown all the time, because there is ignorance all the time. Can anyone stop it? How can the “I” stop it, because there is no “I”. There is so much defilement in a day. Is there any idea of “I am”?

Nina: Yes.

Acharn: Without the *āsava* of wrong view, *diññhi* and the *āsava* of *avijjā* can there be such thinking? When one does not hear the teachings, how can one know the difference between seeing and thinking, as different moments? The Buddha taught the truth of realities, even though they cannot be known, like receiving-consciousness, *sampaticchana-citta*, investigating-consciousness, *santīrana-citta*, determining-consciousness, *votthapana-citta*. *Āsava* is so subtle, it is not known. Even liking, when we wake up it is not known.

Nina.

2.97 Saturday discussion XVI, 3

nina

Oct 27 #165056

Dear friends,

Nina: Acharn, you said when there is understanding of “no me”, this can condition direct awareness. I think that it depends on the level of understanding of “no me”. It can condition theoretical understanding, superficial understanding.

Acharn: When there is the idea of “I” very firmly, can there be moments of understanding as not self?

Nina: No.

Acharn: That is why we have to think of each word, over and over again, to understand the truth of it, little by little. It has to begin, not all at once. For example, when talking about bhavanga, is there bhavanga? Understanding of bhavanga is the moment when it does not appear. Bhavanga has no object of this world.(N: It experiences the same object as the rebirth-consciousness) But can it be known? Nina: It can be known, but not yet.

Acharn: It cannot appear to ignorance. From hearing (the teachings) we know that seeing is not thinking, and that seeing is not hearing. Why are they different from each other? If there is just seeing all the time, there are no conditions for the arising of hearing. After it (seeing) has arisen it must fall away. Before there can be hearing because of different conditions, there have to be earbase, sound and the impingement of sound on the earbase. Contact (*phassa cetasika*) is a condition of the arising of one reality. There must be a moment which is not seeing or hearing, but in between. This is the understanding of bhavanga. Otherwise seeing sees all the time, no moment of hearing to arise. There are not yet conditions for hearing after seeing, there has to be bhavangacitta. That is intellectual understanding. If one has not

heard the words (of the teachings), there will never be understanding of the teachings.

Nina.

2.98 Saturday discussion XVI, 4

nina

Oct 28 #165064

Dear friends,

Acharn: There is seeing right now, but no understanding. There are not enough conditions to experience the arising and falling away of realities, or the nature which can experience and the nature which cannot experience anything. Or to experience the difference between sati and intellectual understanding. We should not merely understand the word, but the characteristic of that object, the object of direct awareness. It has to be with understanding.

Now when hardness appears, there is not enough understanding, to understand it as anattā, unexpectedly, otherwise there is an idea of “I can do, I can practise”. Each word of the Buddha can be understood stage by stage, until it appears well.

There are different names and different degrees of understanding. There are different stages of insight and different *pariññas*. . . Whatever appears is to be known, it is to be studied little by little, until there is firm confidence in the truth of reality. When understanding becomes firmer there is no way to go wrong, to go to a meditation center. There is just letting go by (the understanding of) anattāness. If one hears the word anattā without understanding, that it is this moment, how can it eliminate the idea of self?

Azita: can you talk more about *bhavāsava*, the intoxicant of clinging to being, to existence? I always thought it was clinging to life, but you said something about “I” and “me”.

Acharn: We should come back to the beginning: what is life, what is real? What is *nimitta* (the sign of realities that arise and fall away

very fast). How can there be a nimitta if there is no reality. Why does it not appear as it is? Because of the rapidity of the arising and falling away of realities. It is so fast that it covers up the truth; there is no time to understand anything without the Buddha's teachings

Sarah: There can be clinging to living, clinging to seeing. There can be an idea of "I am seeing", but without wrong view. Thus, there are different kinds of attachment.

Nina.

2.99 Saturday discussion, XVI, 5

nina

Oct 29 #165068

Dear friends,

Sukin: Usually we cling to sense objects and also to the experiencing of them. Is clinging to the experiencing bhavāsava (the intoxicant of clinging to being)?

Acharn: Do you want to understand the difference? Can there be at this moment, when one is not clinging to dīlhi (wrong view), an idea of self? Even when you do not think: "I, I, I" at any moment of seeing, hearing or thinking, there is "I" because the āsava is there, unknown. Even when we do not speak out, it is there.

Sukin: Dīlhi can arise even without an idea of "I"? We can begin to understand the difference.

Acharn: When we feel very fresh, happy, is there kāmāsava (the intoxicant of clinging to sense objects)? Or bhavāsava, dīlhiāsava, avijjāsava (intoxicant of ignorance)? They cannot be the same. Not "I" would like to know that, but whatever can be known in daily life can be known by paññā, not by ignorance. Ignorance can appear as not understanding this or wanting to be that. Without ignorance there cannot be any akusala. It is not just thinking. While listening it is the understanding which understands: there is no one. Then it is gone, no more.

Sarah: What about now, one just enjoys clinging, just enjoys living. Even when there are many moments of *diïihāsava*, we do not know. We enjoy living right now for a moment. As Acharn said, there is no point in working out what is what. There is not necessarily wrong view at the moment of clinging. *Kāmāsava* is common but what about *avijjā* at almost every moment? It is completely unknown.

Azita: I never thought about *bhavāsava* (the intoxicant of clinging to existence). Maybe it is a little clearer intellectually. It made me think how difficult the Path really is, because we want result.

Sarah: This is *khanti*, this is *virīya*, this is *bhava* (becoming, existence), *diïihāsava*, that is “I”. We want to work it out, to catch it, to be aware, it comes in so quickly.

Sukin: Dhamma often ends up enjoying more attachment than thinking.

Sarah: This is catching the snake in the wrong way. We think it is Dhamma study which must be useful, but there is a lot of clinging while trying to catch different realities, trying to know *bhavanga* or *bhavasava*. Just understand what appears very naturally. We can see not only *diïihāsava*, but much stronger degrees of *diïihi* arise so commonly, even during Dhamma discussion.

Nina.

2.100 Saturday discussion XVI, 6

nina

Oct 30 #165077

Dear friends,

Lukas had problems with forgetfulness and he discussed this with Acharn.

Acharn: Intellectual understanding is not enough so that it is a condition for direct understanding for that moment, unexpectedly. That is the way for understanding *anattā*.

Lukas: Forgetfulness is a concept, and a concept is not dhamma.

Acharn: Should we not forget what has gone? Understanding has to be now. One would like to remember this and that and take it for “I will remember”. Remember that this moment is the only reality that can be understood more and more, only when it appears. Otherwise it is gone. If you forget that paññā can only understand now what appears, not by me, but by conditions, that is the worst forgetfulness. This is the only way to eliminate desire and attachment to the self, because all are conditioned. When paññā arises it indicates the anattanness of it. Whatever arises is gone now and it is useless to think about it. There is no one who can do anything, understanding works its way. All are sankhāra-khandha (the khandha of formations, all cetasikas except feeling and saññā). No thought about me, where, what and how. Whatever is there is conditioned, to be understood.

Forgetting about anything is all right if one does not forget about the truth of this moment that is to be known little by little. There is very thick and strong kilesa (defilements) to be known, from aeons and aeons ago. How can it be eradicated so soon? Impossible. That is the way to understand the truth which will eliminate the idea of self from time to time, until paññā is strong enough. Strong enough from understanding the reality when it appears well, as it is, not as nimitta (the sign) of people and things.

Each moment is so valuable when there is even more a little understanding, or even any kind of kusala with or without understanding but based on understanding. If there is no kusala, there is akusala.

Sarah: All dhammas are anattā. It is not anyone who is aware or who is not careless. He (the Buddha) just points to the benefit of developing understanding. It has to develop very naturally. When there is forgetfulness it is another dhamma that arises and passes. No fear of anything, fear of having a lot of lobha, fear of being careless. Reality appears and is gone.

As Acharn mentioned, there is thinking lots of time. We say we are forgetful when it is not the object we would like to think about, but it just depends on what saññā is marking and what vitakka (thinking cetasika) leads the citta to what is thought about. We usually talk about the story of lobha, not the object we would like to think about. Even for whom we say conventionally that he has lost memory, saññā is marking (the object).

Everyone would like to have understanding all the time, to be enlightened. The understanding has to understand the truth of this moment as it is. It just shows the strong clinging to self if we would like it to be different from how it is.

It is helpful you brought up the questions for everyone.

Lukas: What is the proper way of living, the proper way to study and understand dhamma, to listen and understand the meaning of the word?

Acharn: So now, live to understand Dhamma.

Lukas: Dhamma is reality and it also means the word.

Acharn: Whatever arises must be conditioned. No one can understand what will be there next. Why do we live, what for? To understand the truth which can be understood.

2.101 Saturday discussion XVII, 1

nina

Nov 1 #165091

Dear friends,

What is dhamma? It is not the word, but whatever appears. It appears now, to be known as not self. The words of the Buddha state that what is seen is no one and no thing. Only that which impinges on the eyebase. Even while talking there is seeing. Visible object impinges again and again but there is no understanding of seeing. It is all gone and what is left is the memory. A little more understanding of “no one” is very helpful. The sound has gone, there is no one. There are conditions to let go attachment, aversion or whatever appears.

Nina: This is more difficult when it concerns myself. I am talking now, I am thinking now. There is the idea of “I, I, I”.

Acharn: Are you thinking of that now: “I, I, I”? Sometimes when a reality like anger appears (it can be known) anger is anger. One can study it, and not try not to have it. But from hearing again and again one can consider it and understand it as dhamma, no one, little by little.

Whatever arises is by conditions, for a very short moment and then gone completely. Understand one word at a time, like dhamma. The Buddha could not become enlightened if there was no understanding of that which appears. It appears to be object of attachment, aversion or right understanding.

If there is no understanding there must be the self, trying and trying to understand this. Can seeing be “I”, can hearing be “I” ? Seeing cannot be anything at all, it has arisen. No one can make it arise and it is gone. That can be directly experienced but not (by understanding) at the level of listening.

Whatever is there in life can be object of understanding, from hearing and considering the truth. Seeing is a reality. How can there be a moment of seeing? There are many conditions for its arising.

Nina: You helped us a lot to understand the shortness of the moment. It is nothing, gone already when we consider that moment. By saying this again and again it helps to understand a little better how short it is.

Acharn: So, can there be “I” ?

Nina: No.

Acharn: Hearing the truth of what appears conditions more understanding of no self. One can see one’s own misunderstanding of whatever appears and know that there is only one way. By listening carefully one understands better and better, until there is the moment of direct understanding of a reality.

Nina

2.102 Saturday discussion, XVII, 2

nina

Nov 2 #165099

Dear friends,

Acharn: Upanissaya gocara is not an ordinary object, but the truth of the object which has been understood little by little. (Sarah: upanissaya

gocara refers to the object//resort (gocara) of right intellectual understanding. Upanissaya means literally upa (strong) nissaya (support). In other words the object taught by the Buddha to be understood).

Acharn: Taste is not smell, they are all different by conditions. There is not yet understanding of each reality, that is why they appear as “something”. It is very simple but very deep to understand. Simple, because the truth is as it is. No change. It is not different from that very moment. Only that and then gone.

That is the way to study the teachings. Beginning to understand the words more clearly until the truth appears as no self. From intellectual understanding to direct understanding, by conditions. Understanding by conditions, direct awareness by conditions, all levels by conditions. That is the way of letting go understanding as something. The darkest reality is not understanding the truth of what appears now. What is a moment?

Sarah: (returns to my point about sense of self as regards “myself” and other beings): There is a sense of other beings and things out there. It does not have to be in words like it is someone, it is a chair. . .

Nina: It is deeprooted, not in words. Now I see you and Jon, it is deeprooted.

Jonothan: This does not necessarily imply a sense of self, this is the way thinking goes. It conceptualizes. We should not assume it is wrong view, it can be conceit, *māna*, or attachment.

A situation is not important, it is the nature of the mental state that is to be known. The only way to overcome wrong view is understanding what is appearing at the present moment. That is the condition for letting go the idea of self. Letting go the idea of self is the end of the development of understanding. This cannot be soon, there will always be an idea of self until the time of enlightenment.

Nina: Very good you remind us that when thinking of people there is not necessarily wrong view. It may just be thinking of a concept on account of sense impressions. You warn us against that idea.

Jonothan: When Acharn speaks about a sense of self she is not referring to wrong view all the time. It can be (just) clinging or conceit.

Acharn: What is meant by self, or what is self? Self is a thing or “I”. Or whatever is there: something. When I touch the body there is “something” so long as it does not appear well. The Pali term *attā*

includes: whatever is there as something. Is “I” something? Is a glass “something”?

Seeing cannot be “I see”, it is a reality which sees. Each reality has its own characteristic. We can use different words like “I” or self, or thing, he, she, table or chair. All are “something”. There is something what we take for “I”. The best way to understand is the Pali term “attā”. It is “something” including he, she, table, chair. So long as it is “something” it is wrong. It cannot be taken for anything. It seems that it is there all the time, so it is a “thing”. The truth is: it is anattā, no thing. Attā includes everything which is taken for a “thing”.

Nina.

2.103 Saturday discussion XVII, 3

nina

Nov 3 #165105

Dear friends,

The Pali term attā includes everything that is taken for a thing as a whole, not as it is. Even sound itself is not just a sound; many processes experience that very shortly. All together come to be nimitta (sign), nimitta of different sounds. We live in the world of not understanding what comes together and appears as something, no matter we call it dead body or living body, as “I”. It is something there, not you. The hardness is hardness, no matter where, smell is smell, no matter where. Smell is not to be taken for the smell of flowers, smell is just smell. When you take it for something, it is the meaning of attā. No matter in the sense of I, you, dog, cat. It is attā, something. Different by appearance, (experienced) through different doorways.

Tan Than: Paññā helps to see that there is nothing? How towards vipassanā ñāna?

Acharn: These are so many words. Better talk about each word, to have more understanding as it is.

Tam: Direct understanding.

Acharn: One word: understanding and direct understanding. Is there “I” now?

Tam: There is not “I” now.

Acharn: What is that which is not “I”? Only one word at a time. Actually, there is no understanding of the truth which is so very deep, such as no “I” at all. So what is there now? Which is not “I”? Just one word: what is there now?

Tam: Seeing.

Acharn: Is there direct understanding of seeing? Or is there just hearing the word seeing? There is seeing, there is the idea of “I understand seeing”. What is the truth of that seeing? This is the way to understand the teachings of the Buddha which are so very deep. Only one moment, just one word. When we talk about seeing, what is seeing? Otherwise there cannot be understanding of seeing. How does seeing arise?

Tam: because of conditions.

Acharn: What conditions seeing?

Tam: Object, eyes and light.

Acharn: There is a lot of thinking whether there is direct understanding or not yet. There must be talking about seeing in order to know: right understanding knows it as intellectual understanding, not yet direct awareness.

Tam: What is direct awareness?

Acharn: Can there be the understanding of seeing as it is? The understanding of “no I”. What is the difference between intellectual understanding and direct understanding?

Tam: Intellectual understanding understands: I see, with “I” in there.

Acharn: We are talking about what seeing is, to understand the direct understanding of seeing.

Even if you don’t say it, there is seeing. There are conditions for seeing and seeing appears right now. It sees, but the characteristic of seeing does not appear. We just know that there is seeing when something is there to be seen. What about the understanding of seeing? No understanding of it. “I see”, is that the understanding of seeing? It sees, it is not thinking. No direct understanding of any object.

Nina.

2.104 Saturday discussion XVII, 4

nina

Nov 4 #165118

Dear friends,

Acharn: If there is no direct awareness, can there be direct understanding of what appears? It is gone. How can there be such ignorance of seeing right now? From aeons and aeons ago.

Tam: Seeing is done by the function of the brain.

Sarah: It seems like the brain has to do so many things, it is difficult to understand it. What is the reality at that moment when it seems that there is the brain doing all these things? What is the reality now?

Tam: Thinking about concepts, this is an object.

Sarah: Thus, thinking about different concepts, stories and ideas about the brain, the brain being so busy. This has nothing to do with the understanding of seeing. It is not intellectual understanding or direct understanding of seeing. At this moment of seeing it is just the reality of seeing itself, seeing at this moment, then gone instantly. No time for any thought about the brain. Thinking of brain and processes will not help.

If there is no beginning of understanding there can never be direct understanding of seeing. In the beginning there should be firm understanding that seeing is a reality, and this has nothing to do with brain and processes. Very simple and very deep, as Acharn mentioned. It is very subtle.

Seeing is not someone, not something, not a person, not a brain. That is the meaning of anattā. I think that you know that there are two kinds of reality: *nāma* which can experience an object and *rūpa* which cannot experience anything. Seeing is a *nāma* which arises and sees the object. Not someone or something which sees.

Jonothan: Seeing is a kind of experience, it experiences visible object. Hearing is the experience of sound. Tasting is the experience of

taste and so on.

Any kind of experience is a mental process. Though it relies on the various bases, eyebase etc., the actual experience must be a citta, a moment of consciousness. If we think that the experiences are a function of the brain, that is going to be an obstacle to direct understanding of the actual moment of seeing which is a moment of consciousness, not a function of the brain. People are misled by the fact that science can measure brain activity whenever there is seeing. According to the Buddha's teaching seeing must be a mental process. Dhamma is quite basic, the Buddha spoke about things that are to be understood. He spoke about seeing, visible object and feeling that arises associated with that contact, about hearing and sound. He was emphasizing the importance of seeing those realities as they are.

Nina

2.105 Saturday discussion XVII, 5

nina

Nov 5 #165131

Dear friends,

I was wondering about the meaning of the words, used by Acharn, "the world of nimitta" and I was not sure whether this is the same as the world of concepts.

Sarah gave additional explanations of Acharn's words: "we live in the world of nimitta".

Since realities arise and fall away, succeeding each other very quickly, a sign or nimitta is experienced of a particular reality. One unit of a nāma or a rūpa cannot be experienced since it has gone immediately. Just the nimitta or sign of it remains.

Sarah: We can say we live in the world of nimitta or in the world of concepts. We can refer to the idea of a whole that is a concept or nimitta or refer to either concepts or nimitta as the shadow of realities. It can seem confusing. I think that when there is understanding of

realities such as seeing, (or rather of the nimitta of the characteristic of a reality), it does not matter whether we refer to nimitta or concepts as being the shadow of realities, or whether we refer to the whole as being nimitta or a concept. The point is whatever words are used, it is referring to the understanding of realities and to the understanding of the nimitta of realities. This is different from the idea of the whole, the dream world or fantasy world.

We know that it is the nimitta of reality that has to be known, because realities arise and fall away so fast and through the mind-door there can only be nimitta anyway, even at the moment of vipassanā ñāna. After a reality appears there is thinking of the idea of a whole. Whether we refer to the nimitta or to the concept at different moments is not important. The point is to understand that it is reality that arises and falls away and that there has to be nimitta of reality that is understood. When the nimitta of reality is understood there is not any idea of a whole, or fantasy thinking. Otherwise we get stuck on the terms and the labels, wondering why are we using this term, not that term and we forget the understanding of the nimitta of the reality now.

Nina: Thank you, that is clear now.

Azita: Acharn, you reminded us that we should consider each word. How is that done? One word again and again?

Acharn: What is seen?

Azita: We are told: visible object.

Acharn: If we do not talk about it can there be any moment of just visible object?

Azita: No.

Acharn: See, that is why: just one word, visible object, to remind about one's own understanding which is enough to understand what is appearing as no thing, no one at all. This will be to let go the idea of self. Not by "me" but by knowing the way to let go the idea of self. Otherwise, "let go, let go", it is "I", no understanding. So, there must be ignorance there, always there. Just one word from now on: visible object. That which is seen does not appear as it is.

Azita: I can remind myself during the day that it is just visible object, not me, but I often wonder: is that "me" talking?

Acharn: It is not "me", (it is) the understanding of what is thought about. Not me who thinks, not me, not me. No matter it is thinking or

reminding. It is not only the word. Anyone can understand the word but not the meaning or the reality represented by that word. Use the word object, that which can be seen, only a reality. The other realities cannot appear as that which is seen. When this is true, and only when conditions are ready, there can be just thinking about that and later on not just thinking but understanding directly.

Nina.